Christian Courier

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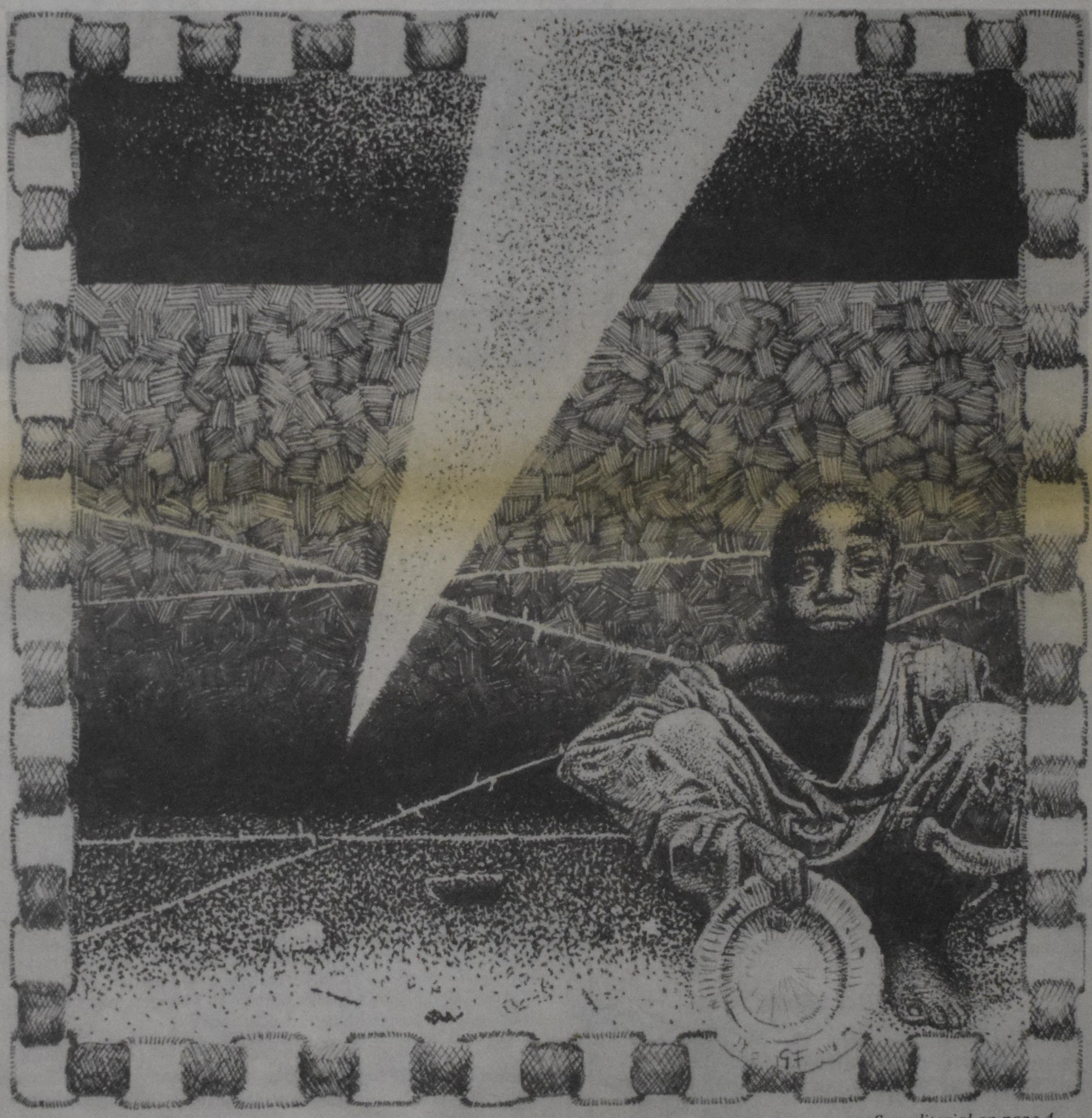

See editorial on page 4....

On those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned (Isaiah 9:2b)

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You will go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and hills
will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field
will clap their hands.
Instead of the thornbush will grow the
pine tree,
and instead of briers the myrtle
will grow.
from Isaiah 55

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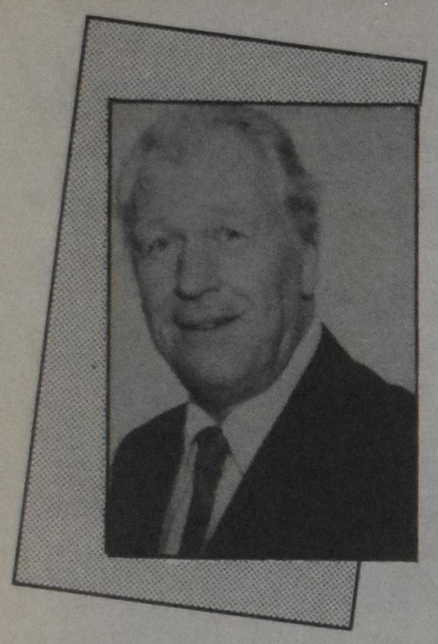

Carl D. Tuyl

While in a train somewhere in the Netherlands I read in an English newspaper that Mr. Chretien had formed a cabinet of 22 ministers. That's about all the Canadian news I absorbed in the last two weeks. The Dutch press is preoccupied with much more important questions: Who will be the coach of the soccer team in next year's tournament for the World Cup? Why has the government failed to curb payments to unemployable people? What should be done with the country's over-supply of manure which poses environmental complications?

★ ★ ★

The political parties in the Netherlands are preparing for next year's election. They are reviewing their lists of candidates for the lower House. Many of the old guard have been dropped from that list in favor of younger members and there's lots of grumbling from the discarded politicians in many papers and magazines.

★ ★ ★

The English papers still think that news about the royal family takes precedence over any other happening in the world. There was ample coverage of the complaint of the Prince of Wales who publicly grieves about the fact that his estranged wife gets more publicity than His Royal Highness himself. "I have been ignored since the day I married," the *Daily Telegraph* quotes the prince." There is, furthermore, usually critical coverage of all activities of the parliament of the European Community.

The trial of Boy A and Boy B who abducted and killed little James Bulger is also getting a lot of attention. Surprisingly, news about the latest push for a political settlement in Northern Ireland does not get front-page space.

★ ★ ★

The German paper *Suddeutsche Zeitung* printed its front-page red with the blood of Bosnian women. Eight refugees donated half a litre of blood, which was mixed with 6.5 litres of ink. The former Yugoslavia remains a country shrouded in grief and mourning. Cease-fire agreements are worth as much as the Russian ruble; not much.

Germany is wallowing ever deeper in economic quicksand. The record for unemployment goes to Albany, where 45 per cent of the country's labor force is without work.

★ ★ ★

There were elections in Italy to replace about 450 town and city councils. They were generally seen as a rehearsal for an early general election. Signor Carlo Ciampi's caretaker government fared badly in the election. Papers displayed pictures of Signora Alesandra Mussolini who will compete in a run-off election with Bassolino in Naples. Signora Alesandra is a medical student whose political views are slightly to the right of the Milky Way, and certainly even more of the fascist persuasion than those of her infamous grandfather. The *signora* is, in addition, a very beautiful woman, which won't be a hindrance in her career, either.

★ ★ ★

Russians will go to the polls on December 12 to elect a new federal assembly, which Mr. Boris Yeltsin hopes will be more sympathetic to his economic reconstruction plans. Mr. Yeltsin still believes in the old Russian system of voting: all in favor say Yea, all against line up against the wall.

★ ★ ★

The Greek minister of justice proposes to release all prisoners who have the HIV virus. He was quoted as saying, "They have received the ultimate penalty already."

★ ★ ★

There are stretches of highway in the Netherlands where only cars with more than two occupants are allowed. A man and woman who were stopped by the police because they were the only people in the car, said that they had a right to use the "carpool stroke" because the lady was pregnant. They got a ticket anyway.

★ ★ ★

Yes, we do have bananas.... Ecuador bought 100 Mercedes buses from the German Mercedes-Benz plant. The bill came to $6 million but will be paid with bananas! The Germans will peddle the bananas in East European countries.

★ ★ ★

France is trying to combat its rising unemployment with a shorter work week, lower retirement age and compulsory cuts in overtime.

★ ★ ★

China's president Xiang Zemin met with his Cuban counterpart, bearded Fidel Castro, who still dresses himself in Army-Navy store stuff. The one-day visit, the first by a Chinese head of state, was seen as a boost to the morale of the Castro regime. The old Marxist-Leninist slogans wafted through the air with the cocktail mix of nostalgia, conservatism and simple illusions, but also with the unmistakable smell of meat gone bad. China, although spouting communist creeds, is slowly becoming a capitalist country where people lust after ever more technological gadgets.

★ ★ ★

Like children looking for something they lost and cannot find, Americans remembered John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, the 30th anniversary of his death. A Dutch magazine published an article entitled "The Forgotten Day," in which it described in minute detail all the movements of the Oswald couple on the day they entered the Netherlands to board the *Maasdam* to the United States. The article is full of allusions to secret and mysterious dealings.

From a list of nine rules for teachers written circa 1872 I quote rule nine: "The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of 25 cents per week, providing the board of education approves." That's where inflation started, of course!

Carl Tuyl is chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Church and is a member of the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care.

Christian Courier

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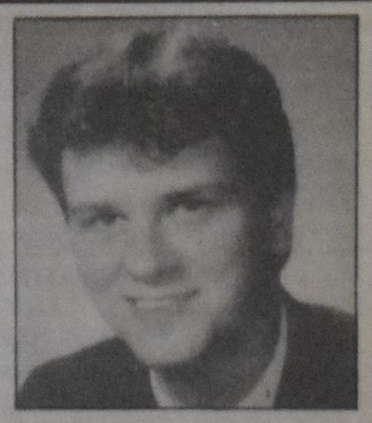

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Editorial

From out of the land of the shadow of death

The front cover of this Christmas issue features a drawing by Winnipeg artist Gerald Folkerts. It is based on Isaiah 9:2 — "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."

Isaiah was talking about the land of Zebulun and Napthali, two northern provinces of the kingdom of Israel that had seen much devastation. Later on this region would be called Galilee. And it was in this area, in the town of Nazareth, that a carpenter and his wife would raise the Savior of the world.

Folkerts transposes this land of the shadow of death to modern times. The place is not definite, but the symbols of devastation are: a boy holding an empty plate, barbed wire, a wall and a heavy chain oppressively locking in the dismal scene. There are also signs of pollution.

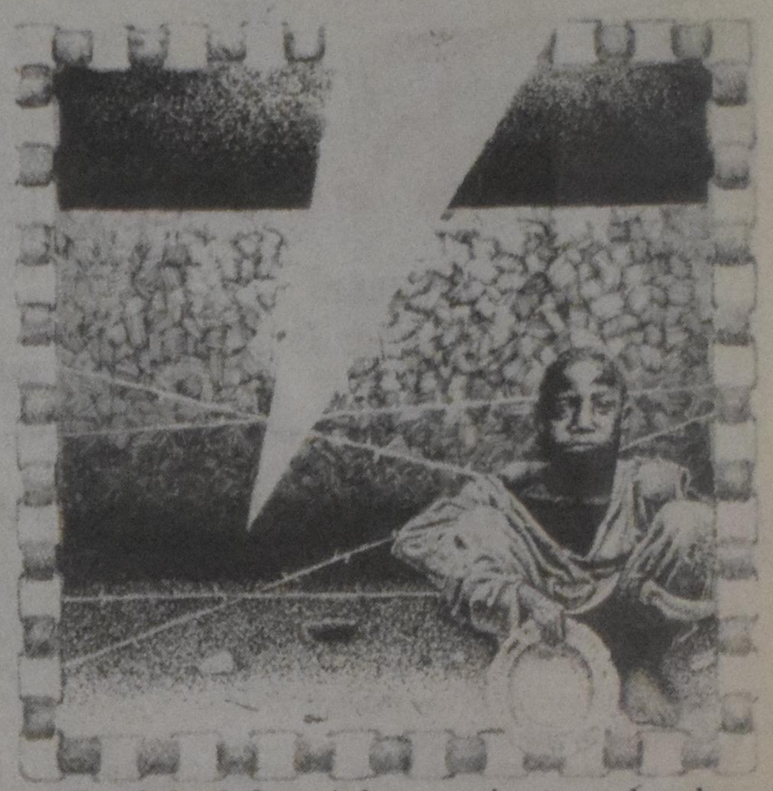
And then a beam of light shines through the depressively gloomy reality. But there's something strange about the beam of light. You expect it to come from above down to the land of darkness. Not so. The beam comes from the darkest spot in the picture and shines upward, right through the chain that encloses the scene.

The power of vulnerability

That's in keeping with the way God saves his world. He does not do it from the outside. He enters the land of darkness from within. Jesus became like one of us, entered the scene of hunger and war with no other power than the power of love.

"For to us a child is born," says the prophet Isaiah as an explanation of how it came about that a great light was seen by those walking in darkness. He does not say "For a mighty warrior entered this world, riding on a chariot of clouds." No, a totally dependent baby emerges from a woman's womb, head first, wet and screaming. And the funny part is that the government will be on that baby's shoulders and "of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end."

"The intense devotion and enthusiasm (zeal) of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."



Don't look for mighty warriors to solve the world's huge problems of evil and hatred. The EC countries are totally powerless over what's happening in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia. The United States' special taskforce could not flush out Aideed. The more powerful people or nations are, the less capable they are of solving the problem of hate.

Light emerges only from out of suffering and pain. We, too, must become like children if we want to fight evil in the name of the Prince of Peace. That's how the enthusiasm of the Lord accomplishes the Kingdom of righteousness and justice.

BW

Christian Courier

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— expresses opinions that are infused by Scripture and Spirit and rooted in a Reformed perspective,
— provides opportunities for contact and discussion for the Christian community.

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Let peace and joy flow like a fountain

When I was young I heard Christmas stories about poor children standing in front of store windows, longingly staring at toys they knew they would not get. The scene presupposed a stable society with people locked into various levels of income. There were rich people, well-to-do-people, scraping-by-if-nothing-unexpected-turns-up people and poor people. And everybody knew his or her place, more or less.

The best one could hope for in that kind of society is that a rich person would become generous and make sure that a few poor kids would get toys for Christmas. What a happy ending! It left everyone, including me, with a tear trickling down the cheek. Maybe that's what was meant by the trickle-down theory?

Today's poverty

One could hardly picture the same scene today if the setting were Georgia, Bosnia or Somalia. In these war-torn places there are no store windows quietly and obscenely exhibiting the things that only part of the population can enjoy. What a blessing! Most store windows are broken and most shops are empty.

But the scene will repeat itself in the Western world. Good old Western world with its peaceful inequalities. It must be good news for the unemployed to know that there are only 22 shopping days left before Christmas.

Spiritual poverty

But there is another Christmas story that could be told about the Western world that is almost more disconcerting than the poor boy in front of a toy shop. And that is the story of a boy and girl leaving a toy store burdened down like the sled of the Grinch who stole Christmas, teetering on the frozen peak of life.

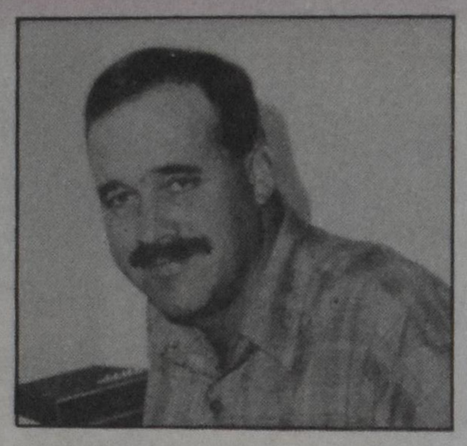
Can you imagine the spiritual poverty of that scene? Here it's December 1993 and the Christ Child is waiting to give himself to those who leave room in the stable of their hearts. But there is so little room left after every crack and cranny has been filled with electronic games, motorized toys and burping dolls.

Imagine having to go through Christmas without the joy of receiving peace and counsel. There are so many spiritual inequities in the world!

BW

Rural Routes

Maynard Vander Galien



A rambunctious cow

The big holstein cow was rip-roaring mad at the thought of having to spend a beautiful autumn day in her stall in the dairy by herself. She was in heat and wanted to be in the pasture field with the other cows.

The constant blearing of the agitated animal was getting on my nerves, and on the nerves of my nephew and his helper who were doing some carpentry work in the barn.

Cows with such raging hormones are known to break out of their tie stalls and take off outdoors through a door they normally would never go through. We had that happen a few years ago. So to eliminate the chance of the cow escaping, and to quiet the animal down, I moved her to the nearby heifer barn.

She looked very content as I gave her some leafy hay. There was a five-foot two-inch-high steel bar gate with bars every six inches separating her from a dozen year-old heifers, which meant she had company nearby. The carpenters were happy the noise problem was solved, and I went about my field work knowing the cow was safe in the well-built 20 by 40 foot pen.

Over the gate

Sometime during the day, maybe soon after I left, the horny cow found the heifers too hard to resist. So over the gate she went. In order to get her belly over the gate, she had to kick her back legs and they got caught between the top bars.

That's how I found the cow when I walked through the barn late that afternoon to start the evening chores. Her head and huge frame were on the floor, but she was hanging from an ankle and a thigh.

My first thought was to get someone with an acetylene torch and cut the gate to pieces and free the cow, who looked near death. There was too much dry bedding in the pen so I ran to the toolshed to get a hacksaw to saw off the top bar of the gate. Wouldn't you know it, both hacksaws had chipped blades that I hadn't bothered to replace. And I was too upset to think where, or if, I had purchased new ones.

I ran to my nephew's truck confident he had a sharp hacksaw in the large toolbox he has on his truck. No hacksaw. I knew time was running out for the cow and ran to where the two carpenters were working and told them to give me a hand lifting a cow. With a large two-inch steel pipe, the three of us managed to take enough weight off the one leg, which came free. But she was now hanging by the one thigh. After a lot of grunting, sweating, groaning, huffing and puffing, we got the thigh out of the six-inch space between the two bars.

Escape from death to die later

The cow was alive and the inquisitive heifers all gathered around her, some even bunting the downed animal. We took the bent gate off the hinges and I manoeuvred the little four-wheel drive loader tractor in front of the cow. After putting lots of pen-packed bedding in front of her, I pushed her back to her old place and we put the gate up again. Thank goodness for help with strong backs!

The cow looked so helpless lying there. Were her legs broken? Would she walk again? How was I to milk her? I put a little pail of water to her mouth which she refused.

I checked her at 9 o'clock that evening and to my astonishment found her standing, milk streaming down her leg. This particular cow isn't one to allow you to milk her by hand, but she didn't (or couldn't) move a foot as I filled two small pails with milk, all the time worrying that she might fall on top of me and I'd be trapped under her.

I got the vet to come next morning to check her deep wounds and bruises. The vet put her on antibiotics and I had to wash her many cuts with a warm disinfectant solution twice daily for two weeks.

Two days later she was able to walk to her stall. Last week, a little more than a year after her brush with death, I sold her for beef.

She weighed 1,790 pounds. I consider it a good Christmas present.

Maynard Vander Galien farms in the Ottawa Valley, in Renfrew, Ont.

Mennega shows pro-Jewish, Anti-Arab bias

The question of Harry Mennega's article on the sharing of a homeland by Arabs and Jews (Nov. 5) begs to be answered with some opposing items in order to come to a fair conclusion.

Mr. Mennega puts the Jews first rather than the Arabs, which, up front, shows that he is biased as to who has rights in that direction. He repeats that in the first and second paragraphs.

The third paragraph more clearly shows Jewish bias: "The Israelis, upon founding their state in 1948 were immediately attacked by five Arab states, and fought five wars against those who publicly proclaimed that their aim was 'the elimination of Zionism in Palestine.'"

To say that it is *acceptable* rather than *treacherous* for a group of people to roll back the centuries and grab land, puts one on shaky ground for even considering the question further. When a foreign people establishes a nation on your soil, it is only natural that you defend yourself against them.

There had been riots from 1929 to 1938. Arabs had rejected the partitioning of Palestine in 1947, and no wonder they resisted. However, Bernard Avishai, the Canadian author of *The Tragedy of Zionism*, writes that the Zionists outnumbered the Arabs two to one, rather than what Zionist propaganda stated as the reverse.

Zionism treats Arabs harshly

Zionism has been and always will be for Jews in the land of Israel and it existed long before the Holocaust. In Zionism's articles there is present a very repressive item which excludes any Arab participation in work projects and which was not known to Jews generally. The Jewish National Fund (JNF) established this policy in 1901.

In *The Middle East* by Talal Asad and Roger Owen we read: "Less prominent is [a fourth] JNF principle, the stipulation of Jewish labor on JNF land. Not made explicit at all — it rarely is in Zionist literature — is a fifth principle: the lessee must be Jewish" (p. 157).

Further on separation rather than living together, Rosemary Sayigh writes in *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries:* "The Hope-Simpson Inquiry of 1930, set up to investigate the causes of the Jaffa riots of 1929, clearly outlined the threat posed by Jewish land acquisitions to the indigenous population: the result of the purchase of land by the Jewish National Fund has been that the land has been extra-territorialized. It ceases to be land from which the Arab can gain any advantage either now or at any time in the future. Not only can he never hope to lease or cultivate it, but, by the stringent provisions of the lease of the Jewish National Fund, he is deprived forever from employment on that land."

Peaceful coexistence as cousins in race needs further explaining as being impossible. Jews are not a race: they are a religious group. Michael Asheri in *Living Jewish* (p. 4): "They are blond, blue-eyed, black, yellow and every shade in between. They have made other lands their homeland all over the world and Martin Buber's idea that Jews still had rights to an ancestral homeland is bogus."

Judah Leon Magnes's pleadings for an eager, intelligent and sincere approach should have been heeded. If those pleadings *are* heeded, there will be more chance for peace. But will it be just?

G.M. Stehouwer
Richmond Hill, Ont.

Christmas Eve 1989 in prison

Ron Dube

Tonight I remember God's grace in my own life. So much I've received. So much I've felt. I've learned to see a miracle in a different light.

I know, God, that tonight is a very busy one for you and a painful one, too. The birth of your Son — we celebrate it without being fully aware of the sacrifice you made for our sins.

When someone hurts us or hurts someone we love, we wish pain on that person. By making that person suffer we feel that our loss will be eased. Give us the strength to be merciful and understanding as you have been with us.

I can't help giving thanks to the Prince of Peace for the peace of mind and peace of heart. No doubt the idea of being locked up during Christmas is painful to many, but so many outside the walls are in greater prisons than we are, locked as they are behind bars of hatred and anger. May God's grace release you from the chains that make you wish for pain on others.

Out of my window pretty snowflakes fall. There is no wind and each snowflake floats before my eyes. It's a Christmas card picture come to life outside my window.

No more words for now. I shall allow myself to embrace the tranquility that is present in the Big House tonight.

Ron Dube is a person whose life turned around in prison. He's now a Christian pastor serving time at Collins Bay Institution in Kingston, Ont.

CHRISTMAS 1993

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by Steve Jensen

You and your children will see Jesus from a brand-new perspective as you follow behind him and his disciples with Jesse, a fictional young boy who witnesses Jesus' life on earth. Jesse is awed by Jesus' power, surprised by his miracles, comforted by his loving actions, and captivated by his stories. Jesus will become more personal and accessible to children as they respond to him along with Jesse.

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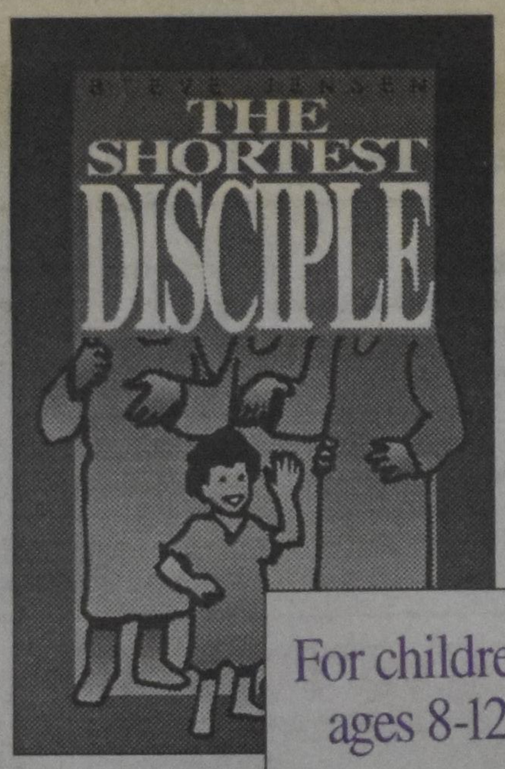

For children ages 8-12

The 40-Year Campout

by James C. Schaap

In this sequel to *100% Chance of Frogs*, you'll wander into the wilderness with the wayward Israelites. Through Schaap's intriguing storytelling, you'll recognize God's grace in the manna and quail and God's wisdom in the law. Most importantly, you'll gain a new understanding of what it means to trust the God who keeps promises and who has the power to save those who obey.

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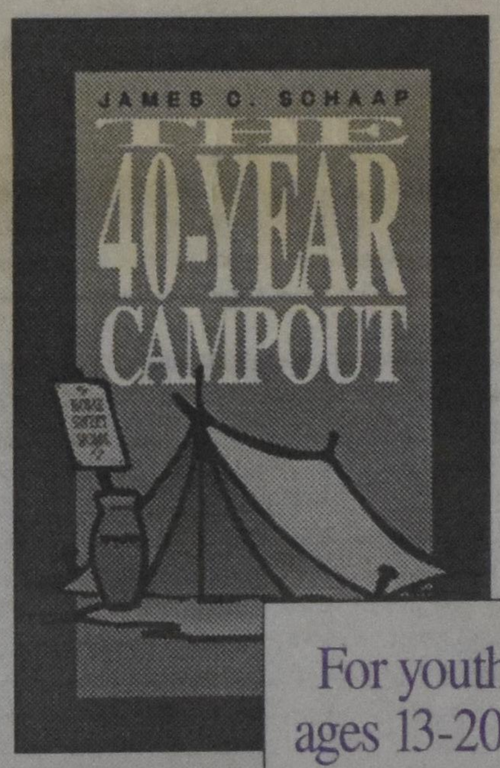

For youth ages 13-20+

Winners, Losers, and Wannabes

by David Willingham

What was it like to meet Jesus face-to-face? This collection of devotions puts readers in the shoes of the little-known people who encountered Jesus while he was on earth. Take a look at Jesus through the eyes of Anna and Simeon, the woman at the well, Jairus, Pilate's wife, and the ten lepers. No one who met Jesus was ever the same again; you, too, will be changed as you experience Jesus' presence through their eyes.

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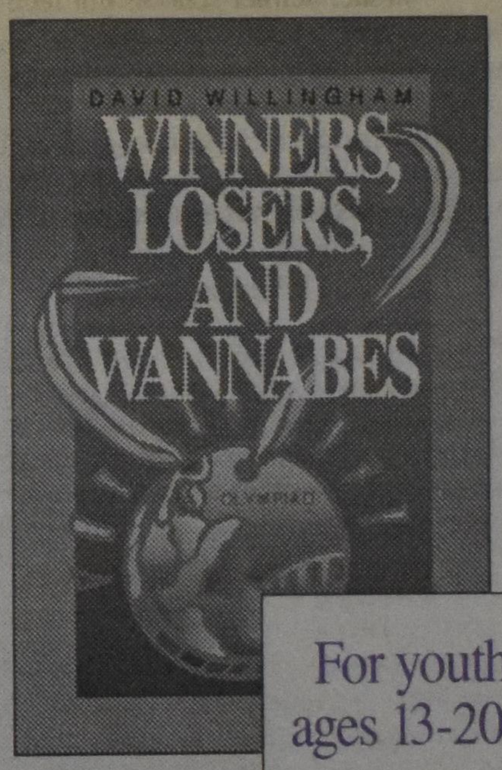

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Society

Daily bread economics

Bert Hielema

The next 150 years

The well-known weekly *The Economist* recently celebrated its 150th year of publishing. To mark the event, its Sept. 11, 1993, issue included a 90-page survey written by 18 men and one woman, all eminent writers, thinkers or politicians. They were "to cast their minds forward to the next 150 years."

The introduction to this insert found that "the dominant sentiment is optimism: about future standards of living, about the gap between rich and poor countries, about humankind's ability to solve as many problems as it causes."

All essayists wrote independently, so naturally, some contradictions appeared. Where one former long time prime minister of Singapore thinks that Christianity will claim no more then one per cent — 16 million — of the Chinese population (that population projected to be 1.6 billion by the year 2150) some say there are more right now. A Dr. Gates sees the major struggle in the 21st century to be between the Islam and Christianity, as was the case from, say AD 600, to AD 1600.

I liked best the essay by the lone woman. Diane Ravitch, a historian of education, wrote on "When school comes to you." She, at least, acknowledged that there is a worm in the apple. Although she thinks that the prospects for education in the age of technology are nearly boundless, not everyone may want to learn what is available. The worm is in the form of the dissolution of families under the pressures of modern life. This will cause many children to lose their emotional anchor, causing peer pressure to shape their values and behavior.

Ravitch wonders where children will learn the virtues of restraint, moderation and responsibility necessary for civilized life.

She says: "The school can teach them but only as a complement to what children learn at home, buttressed by their religious life. If no one is home, neither schools nor technology can take the place of the family. Based on what we see, the future portends ominous social disintegration."

Realistic views or pipe dreams?

Fred Bergsten, director of the Institute for International Economics in Washington has a rosy view. Of course. Only economists believe in Infinite Growth. He thinks that by 2150 the standards of living will rise sharply almost everywhere, in spite of a global population of between 12-15 billion. Even the threat of global warming, "which will escalate to a near-panic in the early 21st century, will produce a worldwide response quickly and forcefully enough to limit its effects."

I wonder how humanity can curtail the greenhouse effect quickly, when it is a result of decades of riotous energy use. "Nuclear fusion... will both eliminate the risks of energy shortages and sharply cut the cost of energy," says Bergsten.

And then there is genetic engineering, of course. Says Norman Macrae, a former deputy editor of *The Economist*, "All diseases (including cancer and AIDS) could be made rather easily curable. Couples will be able to choose the sex of their babies, in addition to other physical characteristics." You want a blond daughter with brown eyes or a tall hockey player? Just order the wanted combinations and you will get him or her... He thinks it will prevent the birth of a future Hitler or Stalin. Perhaps.

In a future issue I will return to this topic. Ever heard of "Hubbert's pimple"?

Bert Hielema has recently "retired" and is now the sole employee of a new company called Enviro Probe International, a division of Enviro Probe Inc. He lives in Tweed, Ont.

Christmas greetings from CC

Back row (l-r): Bert Witvoet, editor; Irene Bom, editorial assistant; Ingrid Torn, advertising & layout; Grace Bowman, circulation. Front row (l-r): Cecilia Van Wylick, layout; Corrie De Jong, bookkeeping; Stan De Jong, business manager; Marian Van Til, associate editor. On the De Jongs' laps (l-r): Dancer and Maple, the CC office cats.

We the staff of Christian Courier wish you at this Christmastime the peace that the Prince of Peace brings and joy as you celebrate the birth of our King.

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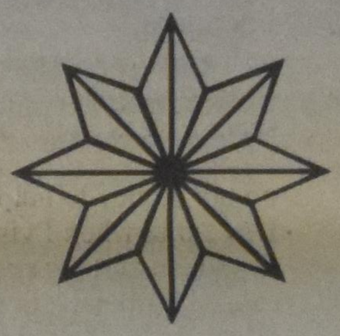

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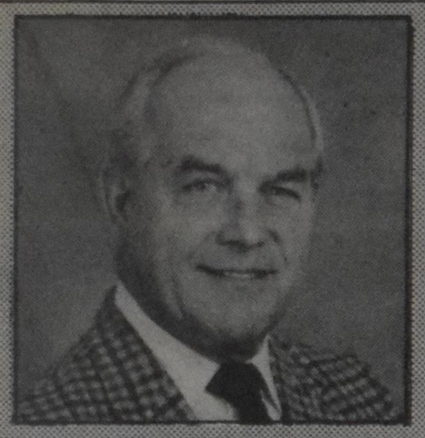


CANADIAN CHURCH SCENE

Jacob Kuntz

On paying taxes

"There is a moral difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion," says Dr. John Redekop in his "Personal Opinion" column in the* Mennonite Brethren Herald *of Sept. 24. Tax avoidance refers to "legal ways to avoid the payment of taxes." The first one is proper, the other one is not. But there is "a deeper moral issue." We quote the following instructive passages from his article:

"We should not ignore a deeper moral issue. This fact struck me anew when, on a recent trip, I heard a certain pastor say that people in his congregation should generously support a certain project with their money and thus 'avoid giving it to the government.'

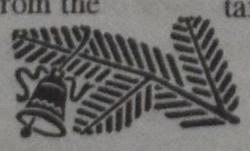
"Was the well-intentioned preacher meaning to say that, if possible, Christians should arrange their finances and increase their charitable donations so that they would not have to pay any taxes? Would the optimal situation be one in which Christians would pay no taxes at all, and the vast array of government assistance which all Christians (and other) Canadians receive would be paid for entirely by non-Christians?

"Should we feel good about a situation in which every time we get an Old Age Security cheque, a welfare cheque, a disability cheque or a crop price support payment from the government we could say, 'This money comes entirely from taxes paid by non-Christians'?

"Would it be God-honoring and moral to be able to say, 'I spent a week in the hospital but I made sure that I contributed no tax money to help pay for it? I smile when I visit my physician and the specialist because non-believers are paying all my bills. I travel extensively on our country's highway network but I do everything I can to avoid paying anything toward road development and maintenance!'

"When the New Testament writers, and Jesus himself, instructed us to be good citizens, did they have such strategies in mind?

"Christians should support worthy charities. But let us be reminded that while tax evasion is always wrong, tax avoidance, if pursued to an extreme and if motivated simply by a desire to avoid paying taxes, is also immoral."



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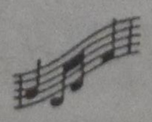

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Plea for the Christian school

It is encouraging to find a warm plea for Christian schools in a non-Reformed church magazine. The* Free Methodist Herald *(Nov. 1993) published an article by a Free Methodist pastor who sends his children to one of "our" Christian schools and is a member of the education committee of that school. What attracts him to the Christian school becomes clear from the following quotations:

"'Why do you send your children to a Christian school?' Coming from a tradition that has been content to support the public system for elementary education, I have had to face this question many times. The Free Methodist Church has emphasized post-secondary Christian education but has been content to support the public systems of elementary education. Perhaps this was largely due to the fact that the public system was originally founded as a Protestant Christian school system. That, of course, has changed. Increasingly people within the church are considering Christian education. Why did we choose Christian schooling?

"Children are easily influenced and taught. They are like clay in the hands of the potter. The philosophies of secular humanism (humankind is self-sufficient), hedonism (pleasure above all), moral relativism (if it feels right do it) and New Age (we can become god) dominate most public school classrooms. Only a Christian school teaches from a biblical, Christian worldview that supports what is taught in a Christian home.

"In my experience, having been involved in three Christian elementary schools and having observed public schools and talked to public school teachers, I have found the quality of the Christian schools to be superior.

"The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, of which our school is a member, automatically sets its standards higher than the province's Ministry of Education requirements. In student testing, alliance school students average 15 per cent higher than public school students.

"Furthermore, we have teachers who approach teaching as a ministry for the Lord. Christian teachers in the public system do as well, but most public school teachers are not believers.

"Our school is run by an independent board elected directly by the parents and other supporters. Parents serve on other committees that help run the school. Individual parents have much more input in the school. Those who make the decisions have a vital interest in that particular school. This adds strength to the school, eliminates waste and red tape, and enables programs to be changed and adapted more readily to local school situations.

"We chose a Christian school because we judged it was the best education we could give our children. I believe every Christian parent should investigate Christian schooling. Since children are more easily influenced than teens or adults, it would seem logical that the most important time for a Christian education is at the elementary level. We need to carefully examine the alternatives. Our public system is moving far from its original course."

Church and the Blue Jays

We did not find much in the church press about the successes of the Toronto Blue Jays. Does the church have nothing to say (for or against) about sports events that capture the minds of millions (many of whom are Christians!) and that can easily lead to idolatry? In the* Mennonite Reporter *of Oct. 18 a short editorial was devoted to the victories of the Jays. It touched upon the deeper problems connected with these mass events.

" 'If you can't beat them, buy them.' That was the radio commentary the morning after the Toronto Blue Jays once again won the American League pennant and prepared for the World Series competition.

"The comment punctured my morning tranquillity as I drove to work. I had stayed up late to watch the game. I had been caught up in the suspense of late inning, narrow leads. I had cheered the victory.

"The morning after, I simply wanted to savor the enjoyment of watching superb players pit skill against skill... or the heartwarming stories in the paper about Toronto pitcher Dave Stewart joining his team mates one day late in Chicago because he was feeding the homeless.

"But the commentator was right. The win was more than skill against skill. It was also bigger purse against slightly smaller purse. The Toronto organization has more money than most other teams to buy the best — even those that opposed them in the series last year.

"A timely reminder that this mass sports event, like politics, can easily lull us into a false sense that all is well with the world. It isn't. Yet the games will go on. And we will keep enjoying them."

Jacob Kuntz is a retired Christian Reformed pastor living in Brampton, Ont.

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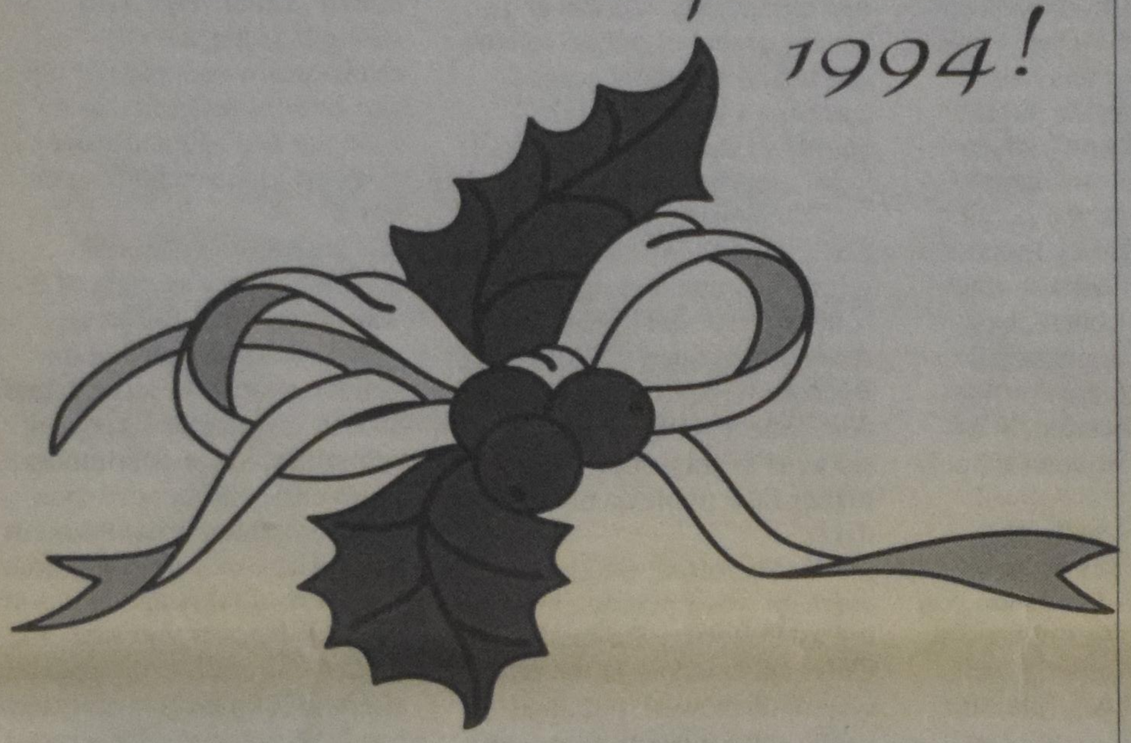

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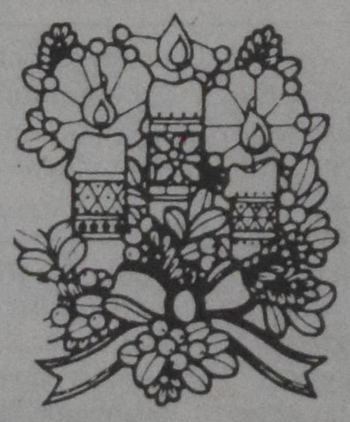

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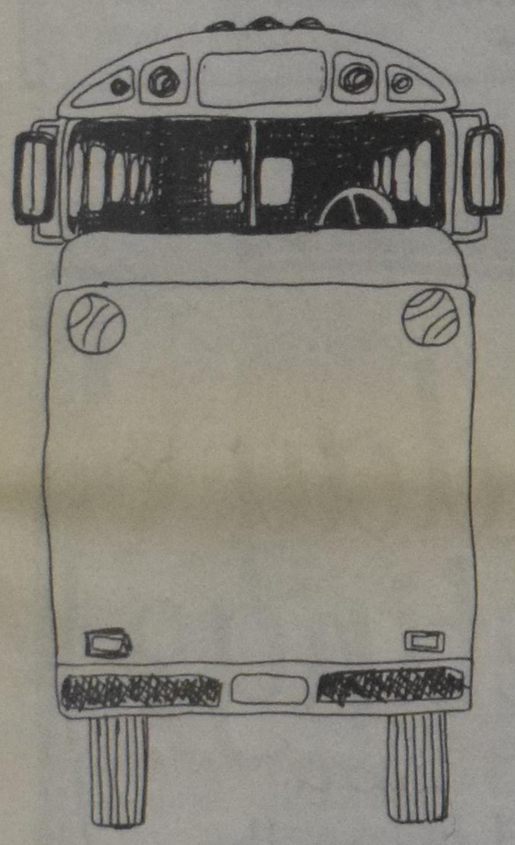
Christ and the cowgirl



I looked up at her mirror at the very second she gunned her eyes up at me, so I shrugged my shoulders when she looked for my reaction.

James C. Schaap

It's so cold outside that the bus windows are sealed in frost, and I don't see this monstrosity of a bus driver until the very second the doors swish open and she yelps at me to watch my step.

"My daughter's laid up right now in pain with a strained ligament, and I wouldn't bless something like that on my worst enemy," she says.

She's so huge that her bulk hangs from the edge of the driver's seat the way a blanket of melting snow leans over the roof on a sunny day. Her legs have been poured into a pair of fancy black Levis; the seams are nailed shut, fortunately, by a line of brass rivets that run up from her boots to her waist. Her shirt is embroidered with squiggles and sequins down her forearms, her cuffs have mother-of-pearl snaps, and she's left her wide collar slanting open halfway to her navel, as if someone should care.

The bus is almost full. I take a seat up front. I've been in her presence for all of ten seconds, but I've no trouble knowing that's the only seat left: everyone else has taken cover.

"She was only stepping off a curb is all," the driver says, "and something went ping in her leg, and just like that she went down."

I'm thinking that it's a university bus I'm on here. One is not supposed to find these types on university buses. What's most embarrassing is that while her jabbering is aimed right at me, her voice ricochets into the far reaches of the bus. I pull out the student newspaper, open it wide, and cover my face.

"'Course I know about those things too," she says. "I lived through a torn ligament myself once — brings you a mess of pain all right. People say a good sprain is sometimes worse than a break. You know what I'm saying?"

Like it or not, she's zeroed in on me, jawing away as if I'd been her neighbor since the war. She's pushing 60, I'm guessing, if you can read between the thick lines of eye shadow and the heavy splash of rouge that turns her puffy face into a Halloween mask. Her hair is nothing more or less than flat orange, and she wears this broad-beamed cowboy hat with a flush of feathers jutting out like the wing of a dead chicken from the right side of her head.

"That was a whole lot of pain, that was. Kept me off my feet for far too long, I'll tell you —."

I get the feeling I'm going to be *told*, whether or not it's in my own best interest.

"That was back in my younger days. I didn't always keep such good records back then, and here if one night two guys don't show up for me at the same hour —." Her shoulders heave when she laughs and remembers. She stamps on the gas and we lurch out from the curb.

"So anyway, I'm upstairs with Alvin, see, and here if I don't hear the front door bell. So I lean out the window, and what'll you know if it's not another guy downstairs waiting." She looks at me in the mirror and raises one fat finger up to her lips as if mum's still the word.

"I'm somewhere between a rock and a hard place," she says, with a few more spicy words between. "So I got to try to make ends meet somehow, see? So I climb out on the roof to get away from Alvin. I sure didn't want him to know who was down there and why, but I got to get to the door for Bennie. Well, so as to make a long story short, I come up lame — turned an ankle when I come shimmying down the gutter."

I'm thinking of my kids' talking clown. You give the cord a long jerk and the doll holds forth until the cord gets gobbled up into its back. But this one's got no cord that I can see.

"The odd thing is, I end up that night with Benny, the guy downstairs — if you can believe it. Of course, Alvin is my ex-husband." She says it proudly, face up, as if she's trying to catch some mid-summer sunshine through the windshield.

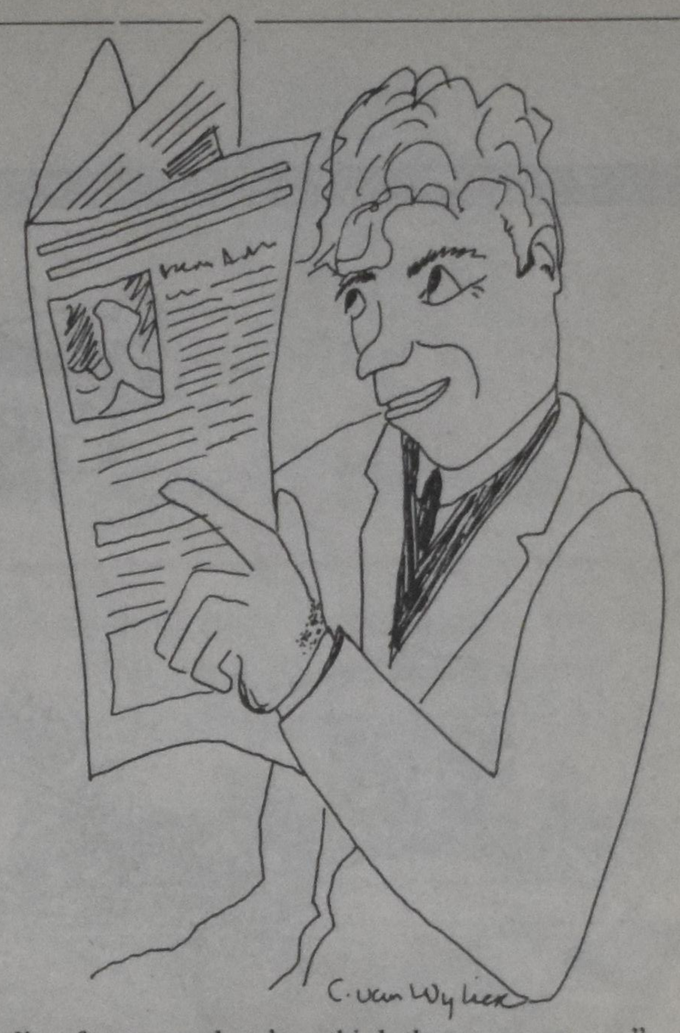
It dawns on me that I've stumbled on Chaucer's Wife of Bath. She reaches back and flips her hair out of the back of her collar.

"Can't help but feel sorry for my daughter this time either — not with the tough time she's had, just leaving her husband...."

It makes no difference whether we're stopped at a light or cruising along through rush-hour traffic, the monologue roars on.

"I told her she never should have married that guy. Long as they was living together, everything was just fine, but once she married him — that was it. He starts beating her, see." She raises a fist as broad as a new cement block.

"I don't know why anybody'd want to get married. Before my daughter married that guy he never laid a hand on her," she says.



"That slip of paper makes 'em think they own you —."

I looked up at her mirror at the very second she gunned her eyes up at me, so I shrugged my shoulders when she looked for my reaction. I wasn't up for a fight.

"You think I'm lying?" she says. "Marriage is an institution all right."

Now I see that her story is meant as a parable for the two cow-eyed students, snuggling up across the aisle. But it's simply no spot for me to lecture on the Christian view of marriage, not with only six blocks to go to the parking lot. "Whatever you say," I tell her.

"Now you take my boyfriend," she says. "I love that man all right, but I don't think I'll marry him. I'd sure as anything move in with him, but I won't marry him. No, sireee —."

Somewhere in this city, I'm thinking that there's a man who's fearfully and wonderfully blessed.

"Trouble is he won't move in with me, see?" she says. "He's a sweetheart of a guy too, I'll tell you —."

I can't lose now, I figure. We're a block from the parking lot. "He won't move in with you?" I ask the mirror.

"Nope," she says. The gravel cracks when we finally leave the street, and she hits the brakes as if she wanted every single passenger front and centre on a dime.

"Why won't he?" I say, shouldering a bag full of books as I get to my feet. The young-and-in-love stand up behind me.

She tips back her hat and squints right up at me, standing there next to her. "He's too stinking religious," she says, cranking the door open for me to leave. "Have a nice day now, you hear?" she says.

Once my car's heater throws out warm air I start to think about this December cowgirl and her too-religious sweetheart. And here's what I come up with.

The strange thing about her story is nothing more or less than the miracle grace of the Incarnation. Even the overweight, obnoxious, promiscuous, over-the-hill cowgirl bus driver somehow plays the host to the parasite power of the Word-made-flesh, who is working in her too, even today, through a boyfriend with saintly scruples. It's as if Christ wants her, even if no one else on the bus does, and even if she's not so hot on him.

The miracle of the Incarnation is that Christ himself pulled on a suit of human flesh and laid himself down in a barn, all for the likes of us — the cowgirl bus driver in all her ribald excesses; *and* her proud passenger, the distinguished professor with all his button-down sophistication. For the publican and the Pharisee.

He loves us. That's the story of Christmas.

James Schaap is associate professor of English at Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa. He has published several short story collections.

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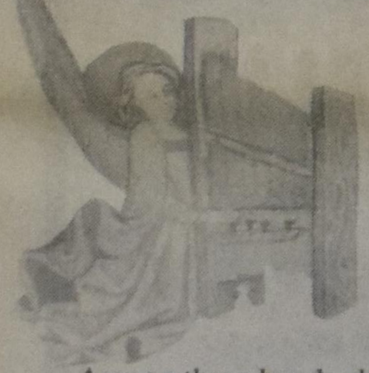
A brief history of the Christmas carol

Or: 'Why should the devil have all the good tunes?'

Marian Van Til

There are 10 Advent and 20 Christmas hymns and carols in the current edition of the Christian Reformed Church's *Psalter Hymnal*, and about the same number and selection in most other hymnals. You probably know most of those and a few more from your own Christmas recordings or from the radio. What you perhaps don't know is that the relatively few Christmas carols with which most of us are familiar are only a few dozen out of *hundreds* that exist.

Where did all these carols come from and why don't we Reformed Christians know more of them?



Among these hundreds of carols there are many different types: pastorals (celebrating the shepherds, usually in a particular rhythm), lullabies, celebrations of nature (and nature's reaction to Christ's birth), wassails (from the Anglosaxon *weshal*, related to feasting, toasting one's health), angel carols, narrative (story-telling) carols, those which draw on legends, those praising the Virgin Mary or deeds of saints, and numeral carols ("The first great joy of Christmas is ...; the second great joy of Christmas...," etc.).

What makes these all "carols" is not subject matter. In fact, a *carol* need not be related to Christmas at all. There are many carols which celebrate the seasons, for example; and there are many secular carols on a host of subjects.

What makes a carol a carol is its musical form. And two things about that form stand out: it is a form closely associated with *dancing*, developed from the medieval processional dance; and it is a relatively simple stanza/refrain (or stanza/"burden") structure (a "burden" is the term for a refrain that occurs at the beginning as well as the end of a stanza).

Because many Christmas carols come to us from the late medieval period, their history is somewhat blurry. Were they mostly composed songs? Or are they folk songs, "music of the people" developed and handed down orally through the generations?

Respected English church music historian Erik Routley is convinced that almost all the medieval carols *were* composed — though in only a couple of cases do we know who the composer was.

They would have been written "by literate, learned and probably clerical authors" (Routley, *The English Carol*).

The carols were the "people's music" in that they were written specifically *for* ordinary churchgoers, not in Latin, but in the language the people understood, and expressing emotions and stories to which they could relate. There are quite a few carols with Latin phrases interspersed with English or some other vernacular language. But such Latin phrases were well-known to the people, either as parts of the mass or week-day offices (daily services), or phrases from Psalms or other Scripture they knew.

Carols were, in Routley's apt words, "not popular by origin but popular by destination" — and once the people knew them they were then often transmitted orally for generations.

Carols a weapon against secular reveling

Would carols have been sung in church and have had some liturgical function? Though we now take that for granted, for centuries the answer was No.

They were initially sung as part of outdoor village Christmas dramas, processions and feasts. Such public celebrations grew out of the dramas which portrayed biblical moral lessons (morality plays), incidents from Christ's ministry (miracle plays) or Nativity events (mystery plays).

While everyone was a church member, the church recognized that not everyone was a sanctified member on the road to heaven. (As the centuries wound onward, and compared to today, one is astonished to read of some of the things that went on at such "Christian" festivals.) It seems that the carols provided a kind of evangelizing function at what had become increasingly secular public reveling at Christmastime.

The musicologist Greene describes carols as "one weapon of the Church in her long struggle with the survival of paganism and with the fondness of her people for unedifying entertainment." Routley agrees, saying carols "summed up the aphorism: 'Why should the devil have all the good tunes?' The dance could be trivial, but the church would spiritualize it. Feasting could be orgiastic, but the church would balance it with fasting. Joy could be selfish and frantic, but the church would make it sane."

Where are they now?

Every European country had its carols: everywhere the church was, there were carols. And the history of those carols was slightly different in each country. But why are so many of the English carols we know of relatively modern vintage?

The answer lies largely with English Calvinists — Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans — and ultimately, with all of Protestant Christianity.

The 'great divide'

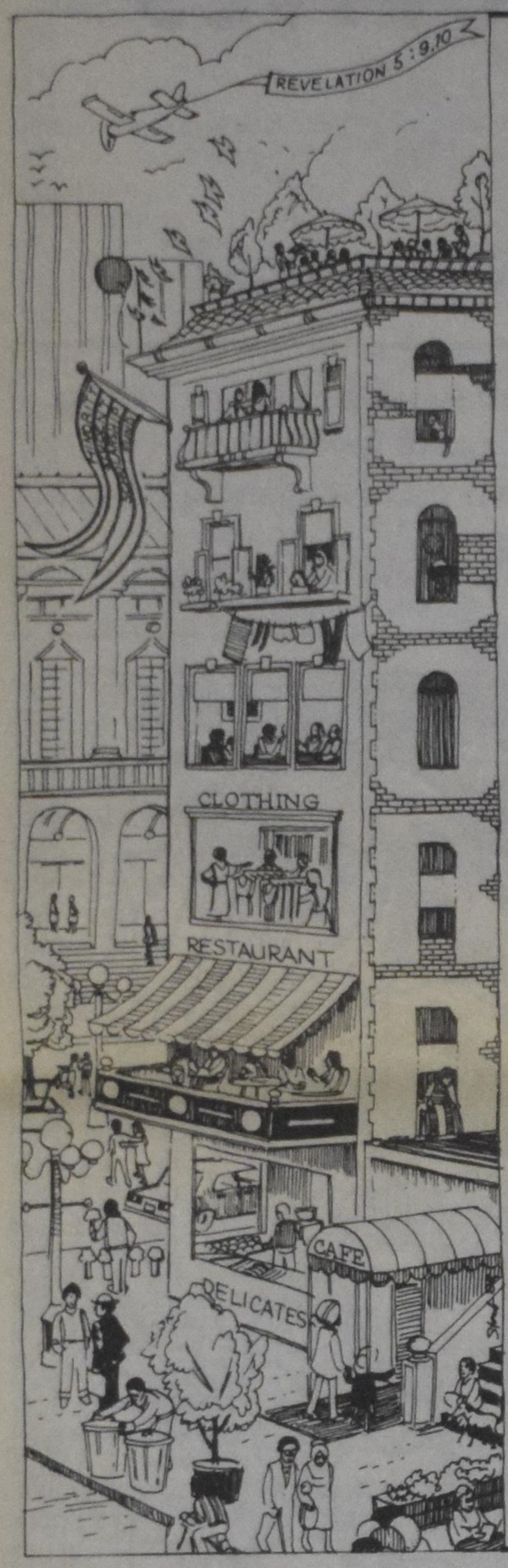
The 17th century (not incidentally, the age of the Puritans) has been called the "great divide" between the medieval and modern worlds, and between medieval and modern Christianity. Church celebrations of Christmas, including the use of carols, were one of the things that initially got lost in that divide.

The Puritans at first reacted with biblical sobriety to glaring excesses and practices in the Roman church that were often no longer remotely Christian. But soon they began to react to those excesses with their own excess. (Cromwell's own life is a sad example of that.)

Continued on p.15...

What sweeter music can we bring
Than a carol for to sing
The birth of this our heavenly King?

Robert Herrick, 1591-1674.



The Spirit does not make us all speak one language or make us all be one nation or one culture; rather he fashions a church in which every language and every culture has its own gifts ... with which to enrich the common song or praise.

What the church needs is not the unity of the "melting pot," but the unity of a choir where many voices sing, not in unison but in harmony, or of a garden where a thousand different flowers bloom in breathtaking variety.

Jamie R. Vidal

SCORR

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SCORR is an arm of the Synod of the CRC mandated to encourage racial reconciliation and ethnic minority leadership.

The Staff and National Board of the Christian Labour Association of Canada wish all members and friends a blessed celebration of Christ's birth and a peace-filled New Year

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You come, O Lord, with gladness,
in mercy and goodwill,
to bring an end to sadness
and bid our fears be still.
In patient expectation
we live for that great day
when a renewed creation
your glory shall display

Paul Gerhardt, 1653

BEST WISHES FOR A JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON
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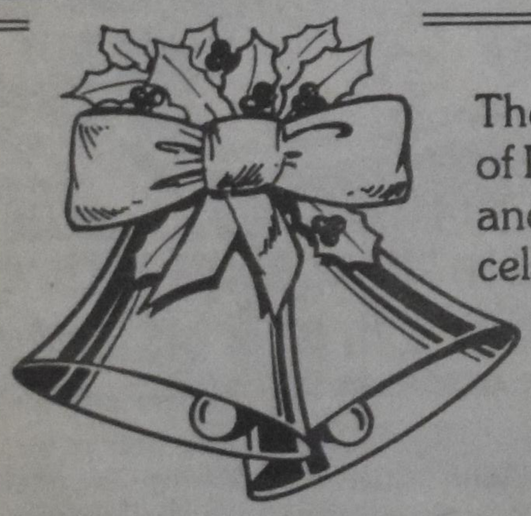


The faculty, staff, and students of Dordt College wish you joy and peace in this season, as we celebrate the birth of the King.

DORDT COLLEGE

God's Hands In God's World

Carol tradition dies and revives

...continued from p. 13

They not only shunned carols, but celebrating Christmas altogether. They objected to processions, which had by that time entered the church building itself with the processing of the choir and clergy.

The Puritans opposed representing biblical stories and characters in on-stage dramas, and of course, the finding of humor in such productions. So they objected, too, to any nativity scenes (creches).

They were wary of focusing on Christ's humanity or on extraordinary deeds of biblical characters. So they swept away all carols which poetically pictured Christ's humanity; they eschewed all symbolic use of the elements of nature (as in "The Holly and the Ivy," for example), and all ballad narratives about the historical Jesus, Joseph and Mary or other biblical figures.

In short, *anything* not a direct quoting of Scripture was deleted from public worship, and, initially, even home use. Thus, well into the 19th century most Calvinists at worship were still singing only Psalms and a few other Bible passages.

'Fish' out of water

Carols had had centuries of use and did not die overnight. In the end, despite the Puritans dour approach, carols probably suffered and died from lack of context. That is, like with the sea shanties, which died when the ship's work they accompanied no longer existed, or the black spirituals, which subsided when slavery was abolished, so carols depended largely on a medieval worldview which had also passed away.

New Christmas songs emerged, in and for an age of Enlightenment and then, for an Industrial Revolution. These new pieces were hymns really, which reflected the spirits of their new times as the carols had for their age.

The Christmas "carols" of the 18th century, exemplified by Charles Wesley (1707-1788) and Isaac Watts (1674-1748), were at once didactic, doctrinal and evangelical. They, too, told a "story" in a series of stanzas (with or without a refrain), but in a way that tended to lay out the entire, cosmic scheme of redemption. (Read through stanzas of Wesley's "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" or Watts's "Joy to the World," for instance.)

Personalizing salvation

As romanticism took hold in the 19th century, carols, like all of music and all the arts, exhibited *that* spirit: 19th century carols tend to be highly personal, often written from a first-person point of view and reflecting an individual (rather than communal or cosmic) experience with or reaction to Christ's birth. The Nativity events were generally "sweetened," creating warm, clean images of the Baby Jesus. Not many 19th century carols include allusions to Christ's suffering and death or the whole scope of redemption, as had many past carols. The tunes, too, were "warmer," the harmonies more lush.

An English revival

It has been English scholars and performers, with their meticulously researched series of *Oxford Carol Books* and their magnificent choirs of boys and men (the most famous of which are from the King's and St. John's colleges, Cambridge) which have created the current revival of both the late medieval carol and those more modern but previously little known.

And that revival has seeped into traditions throughout Christendom.

There is many a Reformed church, for example, which now holds an annual "festival of [nine] lessons and carols," a mostly Anglican tradition at which one might hear and sing carols from the whole gamut of Western music history.

What has also helped revive the medieval carol is our ever expanding knowledge of early music and the trend to resuscitate such music with "authentic" performances and instruments.

New "carols" (though not always carols by strict definition) are still being composed, of course — and one of the foremost carol writers is, not surprisingly, British: John Rutter. Rutter's own choral groups, the Cambridge Singers and the Claire College Choir (a male/female group which has the purity of sound of an all-male choir), record not only his own music but many other carols and anthems from throughout the history of English church music.

If you're looking for a special Christmas present, you might consider one of the many tapes or CDs of traditional Christmas carols by one of a number of excellent English choirs, usually recorded in cathedral-like churches with organ and/or orchestral accompaniment. You can hardly go wrong.

See more Carols on page 23...

A fresh look at a 'common' carol

Marian Van Til

A good recording of Christmas carols can not only familiarize you with carols you haven't heard before or don't know well, but can greatly increase your enjoyment of carols you already know. I've had that experience with dozens of carols but one always stands out. It is "Once in Royal David's City."

I've known this carol since childhood when it appeared (with a manger scene across the page) in the hymnal *Let Youth Praise Him,* which we used at my Christian school and which we had at home. I learned to play it on the piano early on and I loved it from the start. But I had no idea how moving this simple carol could be until some years later when I heard it on a record of the annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols from the King's College, Cambridge, England.

The King's College Choir, then conducted by David Willcocks, has for many years used "Once in Royal David's City" as a processional for its carol festival. The all-male choir begins in the back of the college chapel. A boy soloist begins the first verse, slowly and unaccompanied. His voice echoes ethereally in the huge, high-ceilinged gothic church:

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

As the procession makes its stately way toward the front of the chapel, the whole choir and the organ join on the next two stanzas.

Verse 3 I find particularly poignant; it captures well the comforting thought that Christ our King was also a human being *like us,* and therefore knows who we are and how we feel:

For he is our childhood's pattern;
day by day like us he grew;
he was little, weak and helpless;
tears and smiles like us he knew;

and he feels for all our sadness,
and he shares in all our gladness.

The carol ends with two triumphant stanzas which look forward to the time when "our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love, for that child, so dear and gentle, is our Lord in heaven above...."

On these last stanzas the congregation joins in; on the very last verse the choir sopranos sing a soaring descant which can be heard over the congregation and now thundering organ:

Not in that poor lowly stable
with the oxen standing by
we shall see him, but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high:
there his children gather round
bright like stars with glory crowned.

The key to the beauty of this carol is a relaxed tempo. While it need not be sung quite as slowly as at the King's College with its very live acoustics, singing it at near break-neck speed (which seems to be the way I always hear it in the CRC) greatly diminishes its character and power. (For complete text and music see *Psalter Hymnal* No. 346; includes the Stanza 5 Willcocks descant. Text by Cecil Alexander, 1848; music by Henry Gauntlett, 1849.)

THE CHRISTMAS Choir

Joyce Geleynse

"This is nuts," thought Ben. The notes on his music sheet frolicked and blurred as he strained to keep up with the other tenors. He knew *somebody* was singing off tune and the odds were high that it was him. Out of the corner of his eye he saw two of the altos exchange glances and then nearly suffocate trying to stifle an explosion of laughter. A middle-aged soprano stared at the hapless tenors over her shoulder with an expression that was not likely to bolster their confidence.

"And the government shall be upon His shou-o-o-oulder." There was no use denying it. They sounded ghastly. The director cleared her throat and gently suggested that it looked like the tenors had their work cut out for them if they were going to learn this piece by Christmas. Ben felt his face flush. He guessed it was mostly his fault, even though he suspected that Henry, seated next to him, was not Paverotti incarnate. His first clue to that bit of knowledge was observing Jack, on Henry's other side, plugging his ear to block out the sound of Henry's voice.

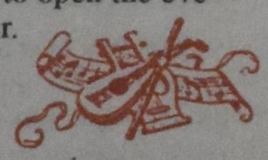
His eyes wandered for the hundredth time to the soprano section, to a slice of blond hair and a patch of pink sweater visible among a jumble of backs and heads that now turned in unison toward the director. A series of high notes floated upward, building in intensity as the director waved her arms, contorted her face and loudly tapped her foot. The woman who had glared so meaningfully at the tenors now sat with her eyes pinned to the director, her mouth pumping like a well-oiled piston, the veins in her neck bloated.

Her name was Gert, and everyone knew she was a bit of a show-off. She fancied herself particularly gifted with a lovely singing voice, but most people winced when she sang a solo in church and all the children snorted gleefully at her exaggerated tremolos until silenced by a cuff from Mom or Dad.

Another glance at the pink sweater reminded Ben of his reason for being here. It was plain and simple. He had joined this choir only because he wanted to be in the same room with Adrienne whenever possible. When he discovered that she'd volunteered to help out the choir for the Christmas season, he'd scraped up all his courage, ignored the loaded remarks made by his family, and signed himself up to sing with the tenor section. Now every Tuesday evening he could savor the sight of Adrienne.

True, he could for the most part see only the back of her, and only a small part of the back of her, but it was enough for now. Even the tedium of practising those monstrous tenor parts was a worthwhile price to pay for her proximity. Adrienne was perfect. Her brown eyes could knock him dead in an instant; her smile took his breath away; her vivacity delighted him and stirred the depths of his own rather subdued nature.

Once, at last week's practice, she had actually twisted around in her seat and craned her lovely neck to smile at him and mouth the words, "Hi, Ben," as he made his way to his place, causing him to tromp on Henry's toes — making Henry yelp loud enough to distract the choir president, who had been about to open the evening with prayer.



Now the bass section was beginning to make sonorous sounds after a session of throat clearing, coughing and general shuffling of papers and queries of: "Where are we? What page are we on?"

Honestly, those guys must have been blessed with deep manly voices in order to make up for having no brains, thought Ben. "Stunned," was the word that came to mind. Especially Pete. Sure as shootin' he'd be singing away from the wrong page and then frown accusingly over his half-glasses at the guy beside him as though it were *his* fault.

"For unto us a Child is boorn...."

Ben could see the rest of the choir was becoming restless. Henry and Jack were beginning to argue in sizzling whispers about the meaning of the term *allegro*. Gert was humming along with the basses, trying, no doubt, to show that she could read music and could figure out the bass part as well as anybody. There was general hubbub in the alto section and a ripple of giggles threaded its way among the sopranos as a funny remark was passed from one to the other.

Suddenly, miraculously, Adrienne tossed her head and turned to look directly at him, giving him a dizzying smile! Ben flushed with joy and confusion and then was furious at his own awkwardness. If only he'd known she'd be turning to look at him he could have prepared himself by leaning back casually in his chair and adopting an air of cool detachment. Rats! In sheer bewilderment he dropped his eyes to his paper and began reading the words of the oratorio.

"Surely he has borne our griefs, carried our sorrows, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

"Iniquity." He supposed it

"Let's remember that Jesus was born to bring us forgiveness for all those rotten things we do."

referred to things like the sin of pride of which Gert was so obviously full. Really, what an old biddy! Those haughty looks and know-it-all remarks. Actually, this entire group (Adrienne excepted, of course) was beginning to make him a little sick. All their bickering. Last week when they had to practise lining up Ben had thought he was back in kindergarten. A conversation he overheard at last week's coffee break had sounded like a sermon demolition derby, and snippets of gossip littered the atmosphere whenever Mrs. Chambers had an attentive ear.

Ben almost felt like leaving. Were it not that Adrienne's presence drew him so powerfully, he'd go home and finish his chemistry assignment.

"Everyone together," said the director. "Let's really think about the *words* as we sing. Let's remember that Jesus was born to bring us forgiveness for all those rotten things we do."

Her softly spoken words fell like gentle snowflakes and a stillness settled on the group. Even the basses hushed their grumbling whispers. "Let's stand and sing," she continued.

Chairs rasped along the floor, papers rustled, and two of the basses needed to know what page they were supposed to be on. The pianist began to play, the director began counting, voicelessly, but with animated movements of her mouth. The sopranos jumped in too soon, the tenors sang some gruesome wrong notes, and the whole procedure had to be repeated.

Then, suddenly, they were all singing. Notes began to meld and voices gained volume and confidence. They were singing in harmony! More or less. The director smiled and nodded eagerly and Ben felt a tiny thrill as his voice became a part of this burgeoning billow of beautiful sound.

Beside him, Henry's face was crimson with exertion and Jack had forgotten to put his finger in his ear. The basses frowned with effort and one or two of them even tore their eyes from their music to watch the director, as she had bade them so often to do.

And Gert. Ben saw that she stood tall and straight, even from behind he could sense the passion that made her sing from the heart. He knew instinctively that she wasn't now thinking about the sound of her own voice but was totally absorbed in the message of the music, and every "Hallelujah" that flew from her wide-open mouth came from the well-spring of a grateful, humble heart.

Ben felt shame. Who was he to sit in judgment over these people? Who was he to sing these words because his heart was warm for a girl yet cold for his Savior? What of his own hypocrisy, pride, selfishness?

He had a glimpse of his own *iniquity* and for the first time in his life he was beginning to experience a sampling of the genuine gratitude of a forgiven sinner. It had been for *him* too, that glorious, mysterious event of so long ago. And for Gert and Pete and Henry and all the others in this room. What a bond they had, this motley group. What a melting pot of sins they all were mired in; what a tremendous need for forgiveness united them. What overwhelming gratitude melded their hearts and voices at this moment.

Ben felt a desire to embrace everyone in one large hug. Perhaps he would just wait till coffee break and then he'd throw an arm around Henry and a

smile at Mrs. Chambers and offer Gert a compliment. He'd save the hug for later. For Adrienne.

Joyce Geleynse is a portrait artist as well as a writer of fiction. She lives in Winchester, Ont., which is located in the Ottawa/Seaway Valley.

Christmas tree humor

We had a little competition going at the office of *Christian Courier*. "Find a caption for the cartoon," was the challenge we placed before the workers.

The following was the outcome.

Marian VanTil: "The men's movement celebrates Christmas."

Cil Van Wylick: "Each tree is worth its weight in individualism."

Bert Witvoet: "Ralph is very sensitive about the Christmas trees he sells. He insists on compatibility between owners and trees."

Irene Bom: "We tree to fit our customers here," said Pete in his usual Zeeuws accent.

Stan de Jong: "To everything there is a season. A time to be small; a time to be thin and tall. A time to be fat and jolly, but to be boastful is folly. A time to have a Christmas tree; a time to stop all hilarity. All that we do rests on the cross; without it we'd be at a loss."

There you have it. The amazing creativity of some CC workers.

If you want to try your hand at a caption, we'd be glad to hear from you. We could republish the picture, this time with your suggestions.

Editor

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Merry Christmas

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CHRISTMAS 1993

"Life can be divided into three stages:

1. You believe in Santa Claus.
2. You play Santa Claus.
3. You look like Santa Claus."

With this and other interesting quotes, quips, and stories, **Jacob Eppinga** presents his delightful insights and often humorous reflections about growing older. If you've read his "Cabbages and Kings" column in *The Banner*, you know how this master storyteller can make you laugh and cry as he conveys everyday occurances in an extraordinary way. *As Long as I Live* makes an excellent gift for parents, grandparents, your adult children and pastor (so they understand you), or a treat for yourself.

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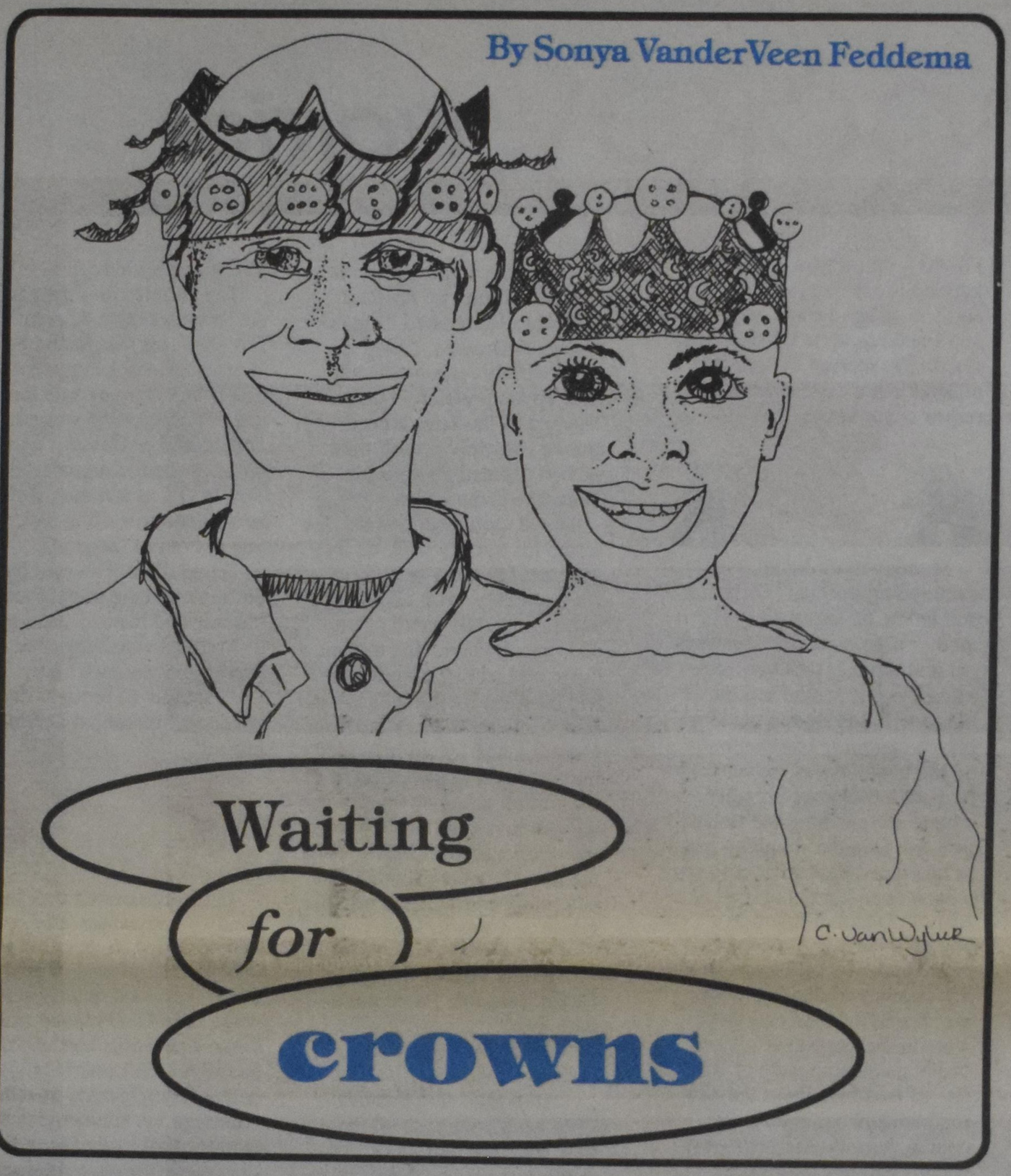


"The duchess will be wearing a crown — a fifty pounder," Caleb had told Eliza a month ago. "She has rooms full of crowns. She even wears them in the bath. Her neck is crooked from the weight of all the crowns she's worn."

Ever since the head nurse had announced that the Duchess of South York was coming to visit the children's cancer ward at St. Mary's Hospital in London, Eliza had wondered if Caleb was right. Not that she could congratulate him if he was. Caleb had died three days ago. They had become friends during the last year, ever since they were both six and sick.

I'll soon find out if Caleb was right, Eliza thought. She peeked out of her room down the long hospital hallway to see if the duchess was coming to her room next. The ceiling light shone dully off her bald head. Her pink sweatsuit hung limply on her thin body.

Suddenly a short, fat man dressed in a black pinstripe suit stepped out of a room and said, "This way, Duchess." The duchess flounced behind him in her long, navy blue dress. Four photographers followed her, eagerly taking pictures.

Eliza stared at the duchess. She had thick, brownish-red hair. But there was nothing else on her head. No crown. Eliza slumped into a green chair by the door. Maybe she just forgot to wear one today, she thought.

"Hello," the duchess said, as she entered the room behind the short man. The photographers followed at her heels.

Eliza tried to smile. She stared at the duchess's neck. I can't tell if it's crooked, she thought. There's too much hair covering it.

"How are you today?" the duchess said.

"OK — I guess," Eliza answered. She sighed. "You didn't wear your crown."

The duchess sat down on the edge of Eliza's bed and leaned towards her. A photographer snapped a picture. "I'm sorry to disappoint you," she said. "Why were you so sure that I would wear a crown?"

"Caleb said you would," Eliza answered.

"Who's Caleb?"

"He was my buddy from across the hall."

"Was?" the duchess asked.

"He died three days ago," Eliza said.

"I'm sorry."

"Me, too," Eliza said. "Is your neck crooked?"

The Duchess laughed. "I don't think so. Do you think it is?"

Eliza looked carefully. "Straight," she muttered.

The man in the dark suit said, "Duchess, it's time to go. Other children are waiting to see you."

The duchess rose from the bed. She shook Eliza's hand and said, "Merry Christmas!"

"It won't be a Merry Christmas now," Eliza grumbled after they were gone. She left the room and shuffled down the hall to an open door marked JANITOR. She peeked in, hoping to find Simeon there. He was the head janitor, and friend of every child on the cancer ward.

Simeon was sitting by a table holding a steaming cup of coffee. His eyes were closed as he sang softly: *Oh, baby Jesus, born to be my king, the Son of God, to you I sing. Fill my heart with love, O Lord, and crown my life with.... compassion.* "That doesn't rhyme," he mumbled as he opened his eyes.

"Oh, Eliza, come in. Don't mind me. I was just trying to write a Christmas song. The words don't always rhyme like I want them to. Why aren't you enjoying the duchess's visit?"

"I saw her already. She wasn't wearing a crown. I bet she never wears a crown because her neck isn't one bit crooked."

"Why are you so disappointed?" Simeon asked.

"Caleb said that she had rooms full of crowns. That she wore them all the time, even in the bathtub."

Simeon smiled sadly and said, "Caleb had a wonderful imagination."

"I wanted the duchess to help me — to get crowns for all the sick kids. To cover our bald heads at Christmastime. Everyone would be so happy. And look so beautiful! It would be the best Christmas ever." Eliza looked sheepishly at Simeon. "I wanted to get one for you, too."

Simeon laughed as he touched his bald head. "I could use a crown," he said. "Not that I have anything against baldness. It's all right on me, but not on you. I can't wait till the day when there won't be any more bald children because of chemotherapy. Imagine when there won't be any more cancer!"

Eliza smiled at Simeon. Everyone on the ward knew that he had a soft heart. He'd been working there for nearly twenty years. He'd seen many kids leave, some living, some dead. And as he worked, he'd often cried into his pail of water for those who had died.

"I wish there was a queen somewhere who could give us crowns for Christmas," Eliza said.

"Sometimes all we can do is wait for queens — or maybe kings — to arrive to give us crowns," Simeon answered. "Don't give up."

During the three busy days before Christmas, Eliza waited. Her parents and brothers visited her each day. The Salvation Army brought presents for the children. She received a book. Several old ladies sang carols, ending their program with a noisy rendition of "Silent Night." Eliza watched everyone carefully. Was there a king or queen among them — someone with extra crowns? Each group of people left before Eliza mustered up the courage to ask anyone.

"Merry Christmas, Eliza," a nurse said as she entered her room. Eliza rubbed her eyes and then she scratched her head. Christmas, she thought dejectedly, and no crowns yet.

"Breakfast will be served in a few moments," the nurse said. "I'll help you get washed up. Your parents are coming later with presents."

There was a tap at the door. "May I come in?"

"It's Simeon!" Eliza said.

Simeon had a crown on his head — a paper one decorated with bright red and green buttons and pieces of yellow and purple streamers. His cleaning cart was loaded with paper crowns, some red, others blue, purple, orange and white. They were decorated with buttons, dried macaroni, colored yarn, popcorn and tissue flowers.

"Which one do you want, Eliza?" Simeon asked. She pointed at a red one decorated with silver buttons and yellow macaroni. He placed it on her head, covering her baldness.

"You're a kind of king?" Eliza said happily.

"A kind king," the nurse added.

Simeon grinned. "I'll go and deliver the rest of these to the other kids. I'll tell them it was your idea, Eliza."

"Wait," Eliza said. Turning to the nurse, she asked, "Can you take a picture of Simeon and me with our Christmas crowns on?"

"I don't have a camera here," she replied.

"Then just pretend," Eliza said. "Say 'click' when we're ready."

Simeon sat down on the bed beside Eliza. The nurse put an imaginary camera in front of her face. "Click," she said.

"That's done," Simeon said. "The waiting is over."

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema is a freelance writer of short stories who lives in St. Catharines, Ont.

Feature

Road hockey warrior

Jan de Bree

Saturday morning, David George, who stood in the living-room, admired his "Road Warrior" hockey pads that he had bought at Canadian Tire with money given to him for his birthday by his uncle and aunt.

"Put them on, Davey," said his sister Katie.

David strapped the pads onto his legs, slipped his right hand into the blocker and his left hand into the trapper. With the hockey stick in his right hand, he positioned himself in front of his goal, a wall between the living-room and kitchen. He flung his arms and hockey stick into the air, spread his legs and fell to the floor for a save, like Kirk McLean of the Vancouver Canucks, his favorite goalie.

"Aren't I good, Mom?" he called to his mother who was in the kitchen with Katie, building a bug home for several ants that they had captured in the back yard.

"Yes, you look good in all that equipment. You must thank your uncle and aunt again for the wonderful birthday present," said his mother.

"Can you come and play now, Mom?" asked David.

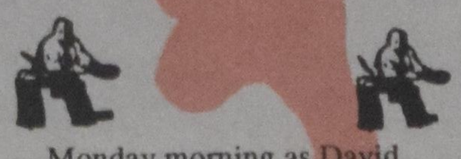
His mother said no to his request but agreed to play hockey with him later in the day.

The time for hockey practice came after the lunch dishes had been done. David and his mother moved the living-room chairs and coffee table to one side; David had put on his new goalie equipment and his mother had fetched her hockey stick and the orange hockey ball.

"OK, Mom, take some shots on me," said David, defending the wall behind him.

"If the ball hits the wall, it's a goal," said Mrs. George.

She hit the ball; it trickled toward David. As he returned the ball, he told her to hit it harder. Her second shot was harder but straight on to David's stick. The third time she weaved around the living-room before sending the ball toward David at chest height. He batted it away with the blocker. Then, moving a little faster, she weaved around, came in close and tried to shove the ball behind David; he put out his leg. For 20 minutes Mrs. George kept up her tactics — slapshots, backhand shots, weaving and sneaking in on David — occasionally scoring, before she ended the hockey game to return to her work.



Monday morning as David gathered up his coat, backpack and lunch, he asked his mother if he could take his trapper and blocker to school. She said he could and he left the house with his equipment in a plastic shopping bag that hung on the handlebar of his bicycle. He pedaled like an Olympic athlete approaching the finish line, kneeing the shopping bag as he zipped past other children who walked along the road to school. Ahead of him was a boy on a bicycle. David called out to him. His name was Bradley, Bradley Mcleod. Bradley was David's friend and they were in the same class. When David came alongside of Bradley, he told him about the new road hockey equipment. Of course, because the boys were friends Bradley asked if he could try on the trapper and blocker. He said he was a good goalie who could help their team win their game at lunch time. David told Bradley he was allowed to use them only after David had played in goal for a while first. Bradley agreed, but he wanted to take over in goal sooner if the team was losing because he was the best goalie on the team. David remained silent.

At the ring of the lunch-hour bell David and his friends came crashing through the double orange doors of the school, and rushed onto the paved playground to take up their positions for their game of road hockey.

"I'm in goal," shouted Jordan.

"No, you're not," shouted Bradley. "David is. He brought his new trapper and blocker, and I'm after him because he's going to let me use his stuff."

Before Jordan had a chance to answer Bradley, David arrived with his equipment and took up his position in goal. The rest of the boys argued among themselves until they all had decided on their places. Then, the game began.

David crouched forward. He rested his hockey stick on the pavement in front of his feet. He was ready, with all the angles covered. Proud of his equipment, David had to look down and admire his trapper and blocker. He thought about Kirk McLean of the Vancouver Canucks, and David imagined himself kicking pucks out of the crease, going down, doing the splits, or grabbing a puck out of mid-air as it flew toward the net. Then they scored. The ball whipped by David into the gravel and was followed by a cheer from the scoring team.

Bradley walked over to David. He said, "Want me to take over?"

"I just got in goal," complained David.

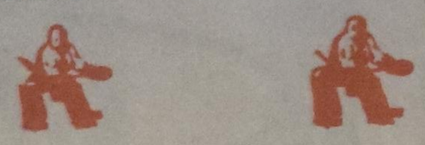
"All right," said Bradley. "But keep your eyes on the ball. Some of these guys are really fast."

From the sideline Charlie Joe, a boy in David's class, held up his thumb and said, grinning, "You're lookin' good, Davey." The other children watching giggled.

Ten minutes into the game the score was five to zero; David's team was losing because he had not stopped the ball from flying by him into the goal. Bradley, who was annoyed, said to David, "You're not that good as a goaltender. You're OK as a friend. But if you want our team to win, can you get out of the goal?"

David did not answer him, but removed the trapper and blocker and handed them over to Bradley, who suggested David play defence instead.

"I should've brought my pads too," mumbled David to himself.



In the classroom after lunch Bradley enthusiastically demonstrated to the other boys how well he played in goal while David sat quietly at his desk. David had played well at home against his mother, and he did not understand how he could play so poorly at school. Although his manoeuvres to stop the ball looked heroic, they were always a smidgen too late. When he believed he had made an outstanding save, the ball had slipped by him.

What could he do? He practised every day at home with his mother or father. He watched hockey on television. He collected hockey cards. He read books on how to play hockey and he drew pictures of his favorite goaltenders. Yet, in every game Bradley reminded him that he was not a good goaltender and removed him from his favorite position.

While David reflected on his situation and felt discouraged, Charlie Joe approached saying, "You look great in your new equipment, Davey."

David smiled at Charlie, said thank you and watched Charlie return to his desk. When Charlie was seated, he smiled at David.

David knew he looked great in his equipment. He could spend 10 to 15 minutes in front of his mother's full-length mirror studying himself dressed in his equipment. He could copy the tactics of professional goaltenders and have his moves look authentic. But what good were appearances if he couldn't stop a hockey ball?

The teacher called the class to order. She told the students to take out their readers and to turn to a story on page 121. The class rummaged around inside their desks. There were complaints like, "Who stole my book?" and "I left mine at home." Finally, when the readers had been plopped onto the desks, opened to the correct

"While the other boys positioned themselves on the asphalt, David put on his equipment. When all the boys were settled, the boy at centre called 'Are you ready, Davey?"

page, and the class was quiet, the teacher asked for a volunteer to start reading out loud. Charlie put up his hand. "I'll read," he said.

Several children groaned because Charlie read slowly. He mispronounced words, frequently needed help from the teacher because he could not identify words; he often skipped words and whole sentences as if he didn't see them.

"Go ahead, read, Charlie," said the teacher.

Charlie bowed to the class saying, "Thank you, thank you!" The class laughed. Charlie read, "Trapper Joe told the city —." He paused.

"Slicker," said the teacher.

"Slicker," said Charlie, and stopped again.

"...I wonder if Trapper Joe is related to me?" he asked no one in particular.

"I don't think so, Charlie Joe," answered their teacher. " 'Joe' is his first name. 'Joe' is your surname."

"Surname! What's that?" asked Charlie.

The class laughed, and the teacher explained it to Charlie.

"His first name is Trapper," said Charlie. "There's a man on TV; his first name is Trapper."

"That's probably a nickname," said the teacher.

"Nickname, surname, whatever!" said Charlie. "I'll just keep reading." He paused again.

"It's too bad, though. I think Trapper Joe would like to be my relative. I come from a good family."

The class laughed. David watched.

"Just read," said the teacher. "Start from the beginning."

"Trapper Joe told the city... slicker to.. ooo... keep his dog out of the wooooods... because it is... courage... bait," read Charlie.

"That's 'cougar bait,'" corrected the teacher.

"Oh, cougar bait," said Charlie. "My Dad says my sister's cougar bait." The class laughed. "She's small. Only two years old; I always keep an eye on her when we go into the woods to play."

"You're not so big yourself," said Bradley. "A cougar might attack you."

"If my father thinks I can look after my little sister, I must be able to do it. If not, then my father must believe that my little sister can protect me if I get attacked. She's strong, you know."

The class laughed. David watched.

"Smell's not everything," said Bradley.

"Sure it is. No hungry cougar would want to eat my sister if she had a dirty diaper on," said Charlie.

The class laughed. David laughed too.

"That's enough," said the teacher. "You can sit down now, Charlie. Someone else can read."

"Thank you, thank you, my sister thanks you and Trapper Joe thanks you," said Charlie as he sat down, bowing.

David looked over at Charlie, smiled at him and gave him thumbs up. Charlie smiled back.

The next day, Tuesday, lunch time, David confidently walked through the double orange doors out onto the paved playground carrying a black garbage bag, his head up and a grin on his face.

"Whatta you got in that bag, Davey?" asked several boys on the hockey team.

"Surprise," answered David as he pulled out of the bag his trapper, blocker and then his pads.

"Your mother let you take those pads to school?" asked Bradley.

"What's it look like?" said David. "It ain't my lunch, is it?"

While the other boys positioned themselves on the asphalt, David put on his equipment.

When all the boys were settled, the boy at centre called, "Are you ready, Davey?"

David bowed low, twirled around on his tiptoes, bowed again, then stood at attention, eyes in the direction of the school flag pole and sang, "O, Canada, our home and native band —."

Everyone laughed.

Someone yelled, "Play ball."

The ball dropped at centre. David sang the national anthem as he rocked his shoulders from left to right.

"Our phone and native sand," he muttered to himself. The ball was getting closer. Then through an opening between the two defencemen rushed an opposing player, pushing the ball ahead of him with his worn hockey stick. The defencemen turned to chase him as he approached David. David crouched down and hummed, "Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb." And when David thought the advancing player was close enough, David charged out of the goal, yelled, "Geronimo," and slashed at the boy's stick until he knocked the ball away.

Everyone laughed.

"Kirk McLean thanks you," said David George as he bowed to the crowd.

For the remainder of the game David mumbled, talked, sang to himself as he kicked, slashed and batted at the ball to keep it out of his goal. He thanked and bowed to the spectators who laughed at his antics and cheered him on. Not once did Bradley McLeod ask to go in goal. At the end, when his teammates came to congratulate him, he stood up straight, saluted them and said, "God save the Queen, she thanks you, my mother thanks you and Trapper Joe thanks you."

From the sidelines Charlie Joe raised his thumb and said, "You're looking good, David George."

Jan de Bree is a freelance writer who lives in Duncan, B.C.
His daughter Josina supplied the illustrations.

Christmas in the Arctic

John Pater

It's about minus 30 degrees. It's late evening, dark, and yet bright, with the snow reflecting light from the moon and the town's streetlights. The snow we walk on is packed hard from the winds that seem to blow all winter in the Canadian Arctic.

This night, though, the winds are still. The night is quiet but there are sounds all around us — our boots squeaking on the snow, snowmobile engines revving in the distance, and the cacophony of electronic church bells blaring from speakers atop the Anglican Cathedral.

That's where we are headed; the igloo-shaped church in the centre of town for the much anticipated Christmas Eve service. This is the focus of our Christmas celebrations here in the eastern Arctic. My wife and I are carrying out a dream of living and working in the Arctic; our dream has taken us to Iqaluit, the Baffin Island community that on most maps is still called by its colonial name, Frobisher Bay.

The Christmas Eve service is a special one; special not just because of the event it celebrates, but because it brings together the whole community. Churchgoers and non-churchgoers, community leaders and ordinary folk, Inuit (the people we used to call Eskimo, another colonial name) and Qallunaat (their name for us of European descent; it means "people with bushy eyebrows").

It's practically standing-room-only when we get there; by the time the service starts, about 600 people are crowded into a space set up for 400. Standing in front of us is an Inuit mother with a baby peeking out of her amautik (a parka with a pouch built into the back of the hood in which to carry a baby).

The local MLA, who at one time was government leader of the Northwest Territories, is closer to the front, wearing a beautiful sealskin coat. Children are everywhere, crawling over and around pews in attempts to get close to friends. Inuit elders (elders being the preferred term over senior citizens or old people) sit together, some coughing repeatedly due to various illnesses they've suffered over the years.

Bilingual praise

The service begins shortly after 10:30 p.m. The minister brings greetings in two languages, English and Inuktitut. Our singing is done in both languages as well, simultaneously.

PHOTO: NORTHERN FRONTIER NORTHERN HOMELAND

The Inuit vastly outnumber us Qallunaat, and so rather than compete, my wife and I simply listen, hearing familiar Christmas carols sung in the tongue of these arctic people.

The Christmas story, too, is told in both languages, but all listen to both versions as if understanding. The Prince of Peace, the King of the Nations, has truly come.

And then a special moment, for us at least: my wife and I go to the front of the church to join other members of the choir. We had convinced them to help us sing a song we'd grown up hearing this time of year: "*Ere zij God*," the song of the angels.

But we don't sing it just in Dutch. We've had parts of it translated into English and Inuktitut. "*Ere zij God in den hoge...* and peace be on earth... *Gutiup quviagijaginik.*" That song has travelled a long way from its source! From the memories of the children of Dutch immigrants... to the listening ears of Canada's arctic peoples.

When the service is over, it's past midnight. It's Christmas! We shake hands all around. "*Quviasukvingmi quviasurgitsi*" — "In this time of happiness, be happy. "*Jisusiup inuviani quviasurgitsi*" — "At this time of Jesus' birth, be happy."

"Merry Christmas" pales in comparison.

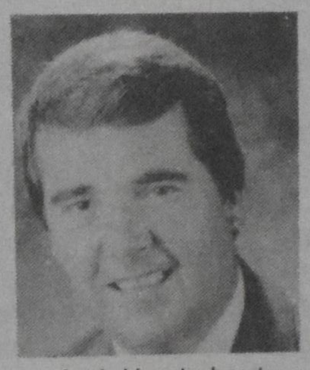
We bundle up again as we leave. Outside the church, dozens of snowmobiles are parked, some with kamotiks (10-foot sleds) attached behind them to carry home entire families. We walk home leaving behind the noises of church bells and snowmobiles.

It's cold and still... and it's Christmas.

John Pater and his family are back in Edmonton, where John works part-time for the CBC.

Peter VanDyk

Tony Vanderhout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Music

A 15th-century Latin/English carol (with "burden")

Make We Joy

Melody southern English, circa 1450

Burden:

Make we joy now in this feast —
In quo Christus natus est:Eya!
[on which Christ was born].

A Patre unigenitus [From the Father only begotten]
through a maiden is come to us:
Sing we of him and say 'Welcome, *veni Redemptor gentium* [come, Redeemer of the nations].

[Repeat burden]

Agnoscat omne seculum [Let every age acknowledge you]:
a bright star made three king-es come,
for to seek with their presents
verbum supernum prodiens [the celestial Word proceeding]:

[Burden]

A solis ortus cardine [Risen from the quarter of the sun],
so mighty a lord was none as he:
he on our kind his peace hath set,
Adam parens quod polluit [which parent Adam defiled]:

[Burden]

Maria ventre concipit [Mary conceived in her womb],
the Holy Ghost was ay her with:
in Bethlehem yborn he is,
consors paterni luminis [consort of the Father's light]:

[Burden]

O lux beata, Trinitas! [O blessed light, O Trinity!]
He lay between an ox and ass,
and by his mother, maiden free.
Gloria tibi, Domini! [Glory to you, Lord!]

The Lord at First Did Adam Make

Traditional English, date uncertain

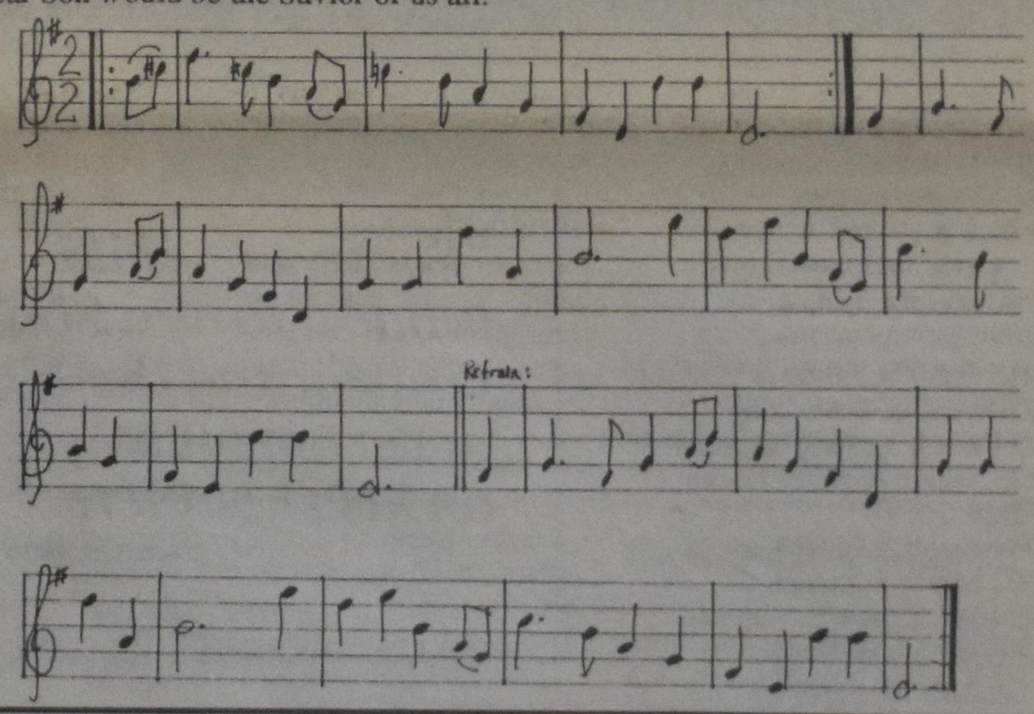
The Lord at first did Adam make out of the dust and clay,
and in his nostrils breath-ed life e'en as the Scriptures say.
And then in Eden's paradise he pla-ced him to dwell,
that he within it should remain, to dress and keep it well:

Refrain:
Now let good Christians all begin an holy life to live,
and to rejoice and merry be, for this is Christmas Eve.

And thus within the garden he was set therein to stay;
and in commandment unto him these words the Lord did say:
'The fruit which in the garden grows to thee shall be for meat,
except the tree in the midst thereof, of which thou shalt not eat':
[Refrain]

'For in the day thou shalt it touch or dost to it come nigh,
if so thou do but eat thereof then thou shalt surely die.'
But Adam he did take no heed unto that only thing,
but did transgress God's holy law, and so was wrapt in sin:
[Refrain]

Now mark the goodness of the Lord, which he for mankind bore;
his mercy soon he did extend, lost man for to restore.
and then, for to redeem our souls from death and hellish thrall,
he said his own dear Son would be the Savior of us all:
[Refrain]



An everyday carol

Past Three A Clock

"Past Three A Clock" is a late medieval carol with a dance-like rhythm which puts Christ's birth in a familiar medieval English setting. It's the wee morning hours when the carolers greet each other to rejoice at Christ's birth (or perhaps when they're heading for home after doing so). Even the deer ("hinds") in the woods instinctively seek Christ. It is common in medieval carols to see nature as well as humankind worshiping Christ.

Burden: *Past three a clock, and a cold frosty morning:*
Past three a clock: Good morrow, masters, all!

Born is a baby, gentle as may be,
Son of th'eternal Father supernal.

[Burden]

Seraph quire singeth, angel bell ringeth:
Hark how they rime it, time it, and chime it.

[Burden]

Mid earth rejoices hearing such voices
ne'ertofore so well carolling *Nowell.*

[Burden]

Hinds o'er the pearly dewy lawn early
Seek the high stranger laid in the manger.

[Burden]

Light out of starland leadeth from far land
Princes, to meet him, worship and greet him.

[Burden]

Myrrh from full coffer, incense they offer:
Nor is the golden nugget withholden.

[Burden]

Thus they: I pray you, up sirs, nor stay you
Till ye confess him and bless him.

A 19th-century Welsh carol

All Poor Men and Humble

Katharine Emily Roberts

All poor men and humble,
all lame men who stumble,
come haste ye,
and feel not afraid;
for Jesus, our treasure,
whose love passes measure,
in lowly poor manger was laid.
Though wise men who found him
laid rich gifts around him,
yet oxen they gave him their hay;
and Jesus in beauty
accepted their duty:
contented in manger he lay.

Refrain:

Then haste we to show him
the praises we owe him;
our service he ne'er can despise,
whose love still is able
to show us that stable,
where softly in manger he lies.

The Christ child will lead us,
the good shepherd feed us
and with us abide till his day.
Then hatred he'll banish
then sorrow will vanish,
and death and despair flee away.
And he shall reign ever,
and nothing shall sever
from us the great love of our King.
His peace and his pity
shall bless his fair city;
his praises we ever shall sing.
[Refrain:]

The residents of Holland Christian Homes and pastors J.Kuntz and P. Van Egmond wish their relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and God's care in the year 1994

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"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."
(Luke 2:14)

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"For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given and the government is on his shoulders."
(Isaiah 9:6a)

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"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit."
(Isaiah 11:1)

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1108 Jake & Willy Hoogerbrugge
Floor 12
1201 Femmie Martens
1203 Mrs. B. Krol
1205 Mr. & Mrs. P. Veenstra
1207 Mrs. D. Staring
1208 Mr. D.C. Apon
Penthouse
PH.02 Mrs. J. Guetter

Colleen meets the challenge!

Thea Ewald

SMITHERS, B.C. — Colleen Tromp, age 8, had to be encouraged to enter her poster in the "Winter Fun Poster Challenge" sponsored by Canada's National Capital Commission. It was worth it. Colleen's poster not only took first place for British Columbia but was also the overall winner chosen out of 5,853 entries.

Colleen's poster depicts some typical fun she and her sister, Cheryl, have during the winter in Smithers. They both enjoy building snow forts. Colleen hoped the poster would leave those who look at it thinking about many other possibilities for fun.

The entire Tromp family was flown to Ottawa to attend the opening ceremonies of Winterlude 1993 in February.

Colleen and Cheryl are students at Bulkley Valley Christian School in Smithers. This is the second year a Christian school was represented at Winterlude. Andrea Vandergrift from West Edmonton Christian School in Alberta was the overall winner in 1992.

Toys for the rest of us

Nandy Heule

The first time I entered the major toy warehouse in our town I did so as a naive aunt. I took my nephew with me. He called himself "Kaakie" at the time, in honor of his beloved grandfather, Carl. Kaakie needed a birthday present.

It took all of about 15 minutes to turn our fair-skinned preschooler into an impossible child, overwhelmed by the color, glitter and electronically-generated sound eminating from the ceiling-high stacks on a square mile or so — for the convenience of yours truly.

The next time I stepped into an identical toy franchise (the one that writes an "R" like kids shouldn't) in another town, about 10 years later, I did so as a naive mom. This time I spent about an hour-and-a-half looking for a toy I liked: a green turtle on orange wheels with three stacking cups on its back. It didn't turn out to be the hit of baby Tasha's first birthday party, as I had expected it to be.

The third and last time I shopped at this toy warehouse (believe it or not, in yet another town), I just wanted to pick up some little things for an anticipated car trip. I spent $75, including the buying of a mega-sized bag of disposable diapers, items I don't usually use. They were cheap, though! This is when I made a promise to myself never to enter the land of the enchanted "R" again.

No doubt, the prices in huge toy stores are generally good, and maybe a little better than smaller outlets. But certainly a store that entices parents, and especially children, into buying many more toys than needed, and which offers every mass-produced plaything on the market, regardless of the values such toys endorse, fails to offer quality.

And let's not even start talking about the values a toy franchise *does* endorse when it presents rows of violent war games, sexist doll-related goodies and over-priced computer gadgets that might teach a child to spell but never to read. (I have yet to discover a Parents' Choice Award book title at any toy warehouse I've visited.)

An at-home alternative

Lest my children be forever deprived of sensible, well-priced toys that match at least some of the values important to their parents, I started ordering from catalogues.

Yes, shopping through catalogues might be a bit more expensive. But it prevents dragging a child through stacks of plastic sidekicks to the real toys you intended to buy. It also prevents both impulse-buying of cleverly displayed merchandise and sacrifice-buying to quiet an overwhelmed child. Most importantly, many quality playthings never reach the mass market and are not sold at your local toy franchise.

Finally, catalogue shopping for your favorite nephews, nieces, and the belated newborns of your 30-something friends on the other side of the continent saves packaging and mailing a gift. Most catalogue firms will ship your gift to any destination (and bill you, of course). Some even gift wrap the present for you!

Conversely, instead of giving grandparents a long wish list and speeches about the commercial traps of "Beauty and the Beast," you might want to offer them one of your favorite toy catalogues. This allows grandparents to pick a gift that suits their taste and budget and won't upset yours.

The catalogues below are some of the ones I have received and liked for the quality and variety of toys they offer.

If this selection gets you going, order the Catalogue of Canadian Catalogues (P.O. Box 203, Chambly, QC, J3L 4B3), which lists many more toy companies in Canada. And just one more tip: I've received all these catalogues by simply sending a business card with "Send me your catalogue, please" on the back.

** **Toys to Grown On.** P.O. Box 17, Long Beach, CA 90801. Educational toys, preschool and up, including a "Pet Vet" kit, stickers, "Let's Play School" kit, bath toys, crafts. Gift wrapping.*

** **Aristoplay Games.** P.O. Box 7529, Ann Arbor, MI 48107. Excellent board games, games featuring musical instruments, modern art, dinosaurs.*

** **Learning Things,** Inc. 68A Broadway, P.O. Box 436, Arlington, MA 02174. A treasure catalogue that's used by science teachers as well. Includes a weather station, mobiles, science books and many other items.*

** **Discovery Toys.** Catalogue offered through local representatives. Try the phonebook for local address or write: P.O. Box 5084, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8.*

** **Baby Love Products.** 5015-46 St., Camrose, AB T4V 3G3. Offers mail-order "Little Tikes" toys, books and many other interesting products, including a large variety of cloth diapers.*

** **Lauri.** P.O. Box F-2, Phillips-Avon, ME 04966. Not mail order, but products available at parent-teacher stores and other specialty stores. Missing puzzle pieces replaced by mail (about $1 a piece). Crepe foam rubber toys, ages 2-grade school. Also three-dimensional Noah's ark puzzle.*

Other resources

** **Free Spirit Publishing** specializes in self-help books for kids and resource guides for parents. 400-1st Ave. North, #616, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1724. First rate!*

** **A Gentle Wind** specializes in quality music and stories on cassette for kids (Mary Pollard, R.R. 3, Yarker, ON K0K 3N0).*

** **Big Steps 4-U.** P.O. Box 362, Montrose, CA 91021, offers an order form for the irresistible songs by Mary Rice Hopkins, including many Bible songs.*

** **Ladybug Magazine,** Carus Publishing Company, 315 Fifth St., Peru, IL 61354, published by the editors of* Cricket. *This expensive monthly publication makes a wonderful gift from grandparents to a young family. Includes games, stories, insert on parenting preschoolers. Also offers music and gift catalogue.*

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The visit of the **Magi:** *a narrative*

Brian J. Walsh

People have short memories. There's a lot of hubbub these days about Jesus of Nazareth. There are stories of healings, confrontations with demons and profound new teachings. This has got a lot of people excited. There is even hushed talk that this Jesus might be the Messiah. Of course, this has a lot of other people almost beside themselves in anger.

I'm not too surprised by anything I hear about this man. I remember some 30 years ago when he was Jesus of Bethlehem. That's right, I heard stories about him when he was born. And considering the kinds of things that happened then, the stories we're hearing now aren't all that startling.

****

I was from a merchant family that did business in Jerusalem. I was learning the ropes of the trade from my father and I had reason to be in the market one morning. It was my job to keep track of who was in town, what they were selling and what they were buying.

So seeing foreigners (beyond the ever-present Romans) was nothing new to me. But the sight I saw that morning three decades ago was something I'll never forget.

This caravan came in from the East and the news spread around town like wildfire — "They are magi; you know, wisemen, astrologers."

"Where are they from?"

No one knew — *maybe Persia; maybe Babylonia.*

"Where are they going?"

To Herod's palace!

"Herod!"

There was something about this visit from the foreign magi and the news that they brought that was unnerving for all of us. I'm not really sure why, but the whole city was in an uproar about it. Maybe it was just because we knew that when Herod got upset there was usually hell to pay.

We were in an uproar because maybe, just maybe, this really was news of the coming Messiah. And yet — we found that news very disturbing. For some reason it was just as much a threat to us as it was to Herod. I've thought long and hard about why that was true. The best that I've been able to come up with is that when it came right down to it, we didn't want the Messiah to come. We didn't really want healing. In fact, healing scared us more than anything else.

Sure, things were bad. No one really liked Roman rule. But here in Jerusalem we had found some semblance of peace — even with Herod ruling us. And we didn't want anything or anyone — not even a messiah — to upset the status quo.

At that time it was just a premonition, but as I learned more of the story it became clear that everything about this Jesus of Bethlehem and his visiting Magi would do just that — upset the status quo. First there was the story of his birth (we've all heard it so I won't go on at length about it now). Suffice it to say that it is not surprising that the adult Jesus of Nazareth plays so fast and loose with the law, considering the family he comes from. It seems that his mother, Mary, was pregnant before she began to live with Joseph and that the baby — Jesus himself — wasn't Joseph's at all. And rather than obey the law and either have her stoned or quietly divorce her, Joseph decided to marry her anyway and take the child as his own. That kind of torah-breaking is what got us into this exile in our own land in the first place, and frankly it is likely to keep us in this situation for a long time to come. Redemption will not come to a lawless people!

And you all know how Joseph justified his action: an angel came to him in a dream, he said. Right!

****

Well, the lawlessness of the birth is paralleled by how the story developed after the Magi went to Bethlehem.

In a move that seemed cunning at the time but backfired in the end, Herod decided to send the Magi off to Bethlehem to do their homage bit to the supposed king, and then have them come back to Jerusalem to tell him where the child was. The idea was that he would then go and find the child after the international observers had gone home, and deal with him as he had dealt with all other threats to his rule in the past.

The problem was that the Magi took another route home and stood up poor old Herod. I guess that they weren't as impressed with his power and authority as he was. But I hear that they were also warned about the whole scam in a dream. Hmm, another dream.

Well, so far so good. We have here a little bit of international intrigue. But then the story takes an incredible turn. We already know that Joseph was adept at picking up angelic messages in his dreams. This time he had a dream that warned him about Herod's plot and told him to take the child and mother and escape to Egypt!

Egypt? The Messiah will go to Egypt? Well, I guess if this child was born in contravention of the Torah, he might as well reverse the story that is the very foundation of our identity as Jews. After all, who is the God of Israel but he who brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of bondage? Is this not on our lips whenever we address our God? Is this story not the very foundation of the law that we keep? Yet in the escape from Bethlehem, this family *returns* to Egypt! They *return* to the land of bondage! They *reverse* the story!

The problem was that the Magi took another route home and stood up poor old Herod.

Rembrandt: *The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt.*

When I heard this, I was more confused than ever.

Well, you know what happened in Bethlehem after they escaped. The death squads showed up and murdered all the male children under two. Rather like what Pharoah did to the Jews in Egypt before the Exodus. From the point of view of the history of the times, however, it wasn't really such a big deal. Around twenty kids were killed.

But for my cousin, Rachel, who lost her firstborn son, Jason, it was devastating. That's why she has never been the same since. But I don't want to talk about that right now; let's leave that for another time.

Shortly after these disturbing events in Bethlehem, Herod died.

The way I hear the story from folks up around Nazareth, Joseph got (you guessed it!) another dream. This time the angel told him to get up, take his wife and the child and return to the land of Israel because those who were trying to take the life of the child were now dead. Herod and his death squads were no longer a threat. Knowing of the reputation of his son Archelaus, however, and also picking up yet another angelic message in his sleep, Joseph decides to go back to their original hometown in the rustic and insignificant area of Galilee. They go home to Nazareth. (Anyway, I suspect that they wouldn't have been too welcome in Bethlehem after what happened and all.)

So there you have it, the story of Jesus of Bethlehem who is now the Jesus of Nazareth causing all the fuss in the countryside. He was born in lawlessness, worshiped by pagans, hunted by death squads; and reversed the story of the Exodus by finding safety in Egypt. And now he seems to be on a course for Jerusalem. I can't help but think that it is a course of death. But then, death has been following him around for some time now, hasn't it?

Brian Walsh is senior member in worldview studies at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. He is also a lay preacher at his home parish, the Church of the Redeemer.

Christmas grace

G. Cathy Smith

I rolled my eyes as I watched my mother lean over the kitchen sink and peer anxiously through the window for the hundredth time that afternoon. Outside, a sheath of shimmering ice coated every object and the scene was like a crystalline fairyland. But my mom and I were not in a mood to appreciate the radiance of the landscape. It was 1967. I was 13. I allowed an audible sigh to escape from my lips in distaste at my mother's obvious concern. The unexpected ice storm had caused my dad and brother to be late. They had gone on an overnight trip to our old house to collect the few remaining boxes. "Oh Mom," I said, in as much of a patronizing tone as I dared, "Dad and Fred will be fine. They'll be here soon enough. Why do you always worry so much?"

My mother paid me no heed and continued scanning the distance for any sign of movement. Rebuffed, I clattered out of the room and went to sulk upstairs. This was going to be the absolute worst Christmas ever and I had no intention of hiding my feelings. Flinging myself on my bed, I reviewed again all the things that had gone wrong that December.

I just couldn't fathom how my neat and cleanly mother could have been talked into moving to this rundown old place.

I wasn't sure what had been worse, moving or my mom being pregnant. Both events had been a shock. Sure, my dad had talked for years about buying a farm but I hadn't really considered that he would actually do it. And as for the other — well, having another baby at 36! We already had a nice family with five kids. Who needed any more? With a grimace I envisioned what it would be like when my mom began to show and I would have to go to my new school and face all those knowing eyes. It was only three months into the pregnancy and my mom was already complaining of sore legs!

My restless thoughts harked back to the move. The worst part was that my budgie had died. For some reason, either because of the strangeness of the new surroundings or because we moved the bird on one of the coldest days of the year, my pretty blue budgie had died on our second day on the farm. It had been a real blow. I had spent so many hours teaching the bird to say, "Pretty Tommy, pretty bird," and he had become so tame we could let him free in the house and he would always return to my finger. Mom and Dad had immediately promised me a new bird, but the sadness and blame lingered.

Moving during the Christmas holidays had been a drag, too. I had been looking forward to attending Central Collegiate with all of my old friends, but now I had only six months to make new friends before going to a different high school. Not only that, but I was losing out on a Grade 8 class trip. The students at my new school had already been to Toronto while my old classmates were still in the planning stages of their outing. Lousy luck.

Moving during the holidays also meant no Christmas tree, no decorations, no skating with my dad on the fields near my old house, and no fun. Period. For me it meant nothing but a lot of babysitting my younger brothers and sister. Mom and Dad were busy, busy, busy.

I looked around my bedroom unenthusiastically. What a contrast from the room I had left behind. Back on Telfer Road I had had a room all my own, with a desk facing a window, and a matching pink bedspread and curtains. I had to share *this* room with Ann. The wallpaper was a hideous green-flowered print, yellowed with age. There was only one closet in the whole upstairs of the house, and only three bedrooms. That meant my three brothers had to share a room; no telling where the baby was supposed to sleep.

"Grace. Grace!" My mother's voice floated up the stairs. "Would you come down, please? I need you to get the clothes off the line. I just remembered there are a few things I had hung out yesterday." I pouted to myself but got off my bed.

In the kitchen I noticed that my mom was still leaning over the sink checking the road, the two vertical worry lines between her eyebrows a little deeper than usual. "I don't get why you are so upset, Mom. Don't you think Dad can look after himself?"

My mom answered a little sharply, "Well, they should have been back hours ago. I'm worried about those two big hills they have to cross to get here, and I just checked and the phones are still out. Not only that, but I heard a little while ago on the radio that the police have been called off the roads because they are so icy. When you get the clothes you can hang them up on the lines in the back room."

I threw on my coat, slid to the clothesline and gathered up the stiff and frozen laundry. I surveyed the backyard with loathing. A lopsided shed, bursting with all kinds of rusty junk and dirty glass bottles, squatted shining and silver on one side of the lawn. Its glistening exterior didn't fool me. There was no doubt about whose job it was going to be to clean it out. And I dreaded spiders and bugs. So did Fred, for that matter. I just couldn't fathom how my neat and cleanly mother could have been talked into moving to this rundown old place.

After the clothes had been hung to thaw in the back room and even on a line in the kitchen, I plopped down with a book at the table. The kitchen was really the only warm place in the house anyway.

Mom made herself an instant coffee and sighed. She looked at the paper dolls Ann was playing with and admired the towers of wooden blocks that the twins were building in the middle of the floor. Then she drifted back to the window. She glanced for a moment at me.

"Grace, do you know what we should do? We should make *borstplaat*."

PHOTO: FAMILY BY MARGARET MEAD AND KEN HEYMAN

We didn't starve like the people in the big cities, but we had some pretty lean years.

I hardly lifted my eyes from the book, not wanting to appear too interested. "What's that?"

"We used to make it back in Holland around Christmas time. It's a kind of hard candy. When we were little, we used to get it every year when *Sinterklaas* came. Your *oma* would make it in all different shapes and colors! Of course, we never got it during the war. Then there was no sugar to be had. And sugar is the main ingredient."

I rummaged in the stove drawer and found the heart-shaped baking tins my mom wanted. She hunted up the vanilla extract and food coloring, banging hard on the cupboard door first to scare away any mice. I knew that my mother feared mice more than just about anything. Again I wondered how she could have ever agreed to move here.

Borstplaat was surprisingly simple to make. I boiled water and sugar together until it thickened and would form a string as it dripped from the spoon. The sticky stuff could then be flavored with vanilla and tinted with food coloring. In spite of myself, I began to enjoy making the candy. It was fun to color the mixture in a variety of shades. The tiny dark green and light green hearts looked attractive together. We made a big pink heart too, and Mom even made a brown one with some instant coffee. We sat the filled forms out in the covered porch to cool.

What was even more fun than making the candy was listening to the stories Mom told in those few free moments between supervising my baking efforts, mediating the squabbles of the twins, occasionally patting the easy-going Ann on the head, and once in a while looking through the window.

I was amazed to discover that my meticulous mom had had lice during the war. "Everybody had lice. There was nothing you could do about it.

Continued on p. 30...

The *miracle* of *Christmas*

A handful of people have grasped the certainty and the truth contained in this incredible message of a savior wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger.

W.A. Visser 't Hooft

Among the great artists Rembrandt is one of the few who in their representation of the Christmas story have expressed the whole paradoxical harshness of the incarnation. The great majority of painters do not allow the gospel to speak for itself, but make of the Christmas story either a poetic legend acted in celestial spheres, or else quite a worldly event. Few of them have grasped the importance of accepting the mystery of the birth of God's Son without giving it a purely earthly interpretation.

Rembrandt too, certainly did not grasp the import of this message from the beginning.... But from 1642 on, he gradually began to discover in tranquil contemplation the deeper significance of Christ's birth. He knows that Bethlehem means that God himself intervenes and that this can only be comprehended by faith.

As in all his religious painting, he abandons here too everything external which might attract the eye, everything majestic and angelic, so that the reality of the event, its concrete and human character, can no longer be doubted. The most important thing, however, is not what can be seen, as he emphasizes explicitly. It is the fact that this weak child in the manger is the Savior of the world.

Adoration of the shepherds

An examination of *Adoration of the Shepherds* may help us understand Rembrandt's Christmas message better.

This etching, finished in 1654 and generally known under the title *Adoration of the Shepherds with the Lamp,* probably strikes many people as quite an ordinary picture. But might not this very ordinariness conceal the message of the artist?

The Bible does not tell us that Jesus was born in a classical ruin (as the artists of the Renaissance from Mantegna to Veronese represent it); it does not say that Mary was dressed in a gorgeous garment, nor that the shepherds were picturesque figures in an Arcadian play (as they are in the pictures of Coreggio and many others). The Madonna of the Counter-Reformation who in joy and pride tries to direct the observer's eye to her child is not known to the Bible.

How much simpler and plainer is Scripture. Anyone who tries to say more than it does, says less....

Here now we see quite an ordinary shed. Father is sitting on a wheelbarrow, mother in the straw. Shepherds are arriving with their wives and children. One has brought his bagpipe along. A small boy is gazing at the newly born child with great interest. Could there be a more human, a more ordinary scene?

And yet something extraordinary seems to be happening in this scene and giving it a deeper meaning. The attitude of the shepherds indicates that they have just discovered something tremendous. It is not the quite natural neighborly curiosity at the birth of a child. Their joy is mingled with awe and amazement. The shepherd who is taking off his hat has suddenly seen a great light, and another lifts his hands as if for prayer.

A handful of people have grasped the certainty and the truth contained in this incredible message of a savior 'wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger.' Joseph seems to say: 'I do not understand it either, but it is so: this child is the Messiah promised by God.'

And his mother? She is not sitting on a throne, she does not dream of parading her child before the spectators. Her gaze is lost in the distance. Her joy is overshadowed by the grief which she foresees in the fate of her son....

Sometimes Rembrandt's Christmas message seems to be severe and harsh. There is no picture, from his maturer years at least, which transforms Christmas into a touching idyll. He sees the shadow of the cross over the manger. But the way in which he proclaims the joy of Christmas, deepens its content all the more. The joy he knows of does not depend on any earthly conditions; it springs from the one fact that a Savior has been born to us, which is Christ the Lord.

Reprinted from Rembrandt and the Gospel.

Christmas grace

...continued from p.28

"We didn't have any soap, either. Oma used to make some homemade soap out of lye. We didn't starve like the people in the big cities, but we had some pretty lean years. I remember that I once got an orange at school. The teachers were worried that we children never ate any fruit. That orange had to be the best thing I've ever tasted."

I heard how my mom had to stand in line for hours to get a piece of meat if a pig happened to be butchered in the village. "Your *oma* used to make all seven of us stand in line with the ration cards of our old neighbors because the wait was too long for their old legs. I didn't want to, but I had to. You're named for her, you know. Grace was the closest English version of Grietje that we could think of."

Mom told me about the different jobs she had had in Holland before she was married. "You know, Grace, I had to quit school at 14. There were a lot of years spent working before I met your dad and got married. I delivered papers all over the countryside near my village on my bike and turned my pay over to Oma. I worked in a store for a couple of years and washed cold cement floors on my knees."

The afternoon passed swiftly for me and soon it was time to make the Saturday night soup and start bathing the younger children. As I was running the water for the twins' bath, I heard my mom give a little shriek. Sure that it was a mouse, I rushed to the kitchen. But it was my dad and Fred. As my brother pushed open the back door and my dad entered behind him, my mother's reaction floored me. She flung her arms around my dad and wept with great heaving sobs. She cried for quite a few minutes, not letting go of him. Was this the same person who had told me stories all afternoon?

Over supper Dad told us what had happened. He and Fred had been trapped by the icy big hill about three miles down the road. Try as they might, they just couldn't get the car up the hill.

"We must have worked at it for at least an hour and a half. Fred's hands were getting red with cold so we finally walked to the nearest farm to see if we could get some help. That's when we found out that the phones were down and that even the police had been pulled off the roads. I knew how you would be worrying, Margaret, so I knew I had to make it home somehow. The farmer and his wife — their name's Johnson — they made us feel really welcome. They gave us some lunch and then Ray took out his tractor and tried to pull us up the hill with chains. But it was no go. So it was back to the farm for some more coffee. Then I decided to walk home because I knew you would be half out of your mind, especially if you had been listening to the radio. So Eileen — that's her name — gave us some mitts and scarves and bundled us up as well as she could and we started walking home. Poor Fred here, I think he's just about done in, aren't you, buddy?"

Dad paused his tale in order to refill his bowl. Then he remarked, "Good people here, that's for sure. Those Johnsons, they couldn't do enough to help us. They set aside their own concerns and did their best to be good neighbors. I think we're going to be all right out here in the country, if that's the way these farms operate."

After dessert, Dad pulled out the Bible for the nightly reading. Usually this was where I tuned out, but tonight a phrase jumped out at me because I heard my name mentioned: "...In the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus." I studied my brothers as my dad read on. The Johnsons had been kind to Dad today but they weren't the only ones who had set aside their own concerns to think of someone else.

After Dad had offered the closing prayer, I began to clear the table. "You sit down, Mom. I can do the dishes alone for once." Later, when the dishes were done, I gave my mother an awkward hug.

"Thanks for naming me after Oma, Mom. I think I just figured out what my name is really all about."

G. Cathy Smith lives in Wyoming, Ont., teaches at Wyoming Christian School and loves to write.

Mom didn't lose it, you did

Art White

Whenever we stay with our grown children I end up stocking their shelves with a few "necessities" which none of them ever seem to have on hand: non-sugared dry cereal, light bulbs, bathroom cleanser, a can opener which works! Noah, our five-year-old grandson "rode shotgun" on one of these shopping sprees.

The can opener was the last item left to buy when Noah finally piped up, "Grandpa, this one's just like all the others you looked at. Why don't you buy it here? You get stamps."

"It costs twice what I wanted to pay," I said kind of sheepishly.

"Then give it to Mom for Christmas."

What a great idea! Somehow, I didn't mind paying twice the price for a Christmas present....

When we got home Noah checked the house for his mom (who was upstairs), then we sneaked in our purchases and put them where she'd find them one by one and be surprised. "Let's wrap the can opener for Christmas, Grandpa. Where is it?"

It wasn't in any of the packages. I checked the car. No opener. As I mentally retraced our steps, it hit me. "I left that thing on the roof (where I had put it when I unlocked the car)! My neck tensed, my cheeks flushed, my brain went into storage.

Noah couldn't understand why I wouldn't go back and look for the package. It could have fallen off anywhere along the way, I told him. "So — let's look anyway, Grandpa."

"It's gone," I insisted, a bit irritated. "Someone's picked it up by now."

Noah didn't give up, and soon I was retracing the roads to the mall. This time I went alone. I didn't see any package along the way or where we had parked. My brain wouldn't come out of storage. I drove home feeling daft and numb.

"Did you find it, Grandpa?" asked Noah who was waiting by the driveway.

"No can opener," I lamented.

"Did you buy another one?" he continued.

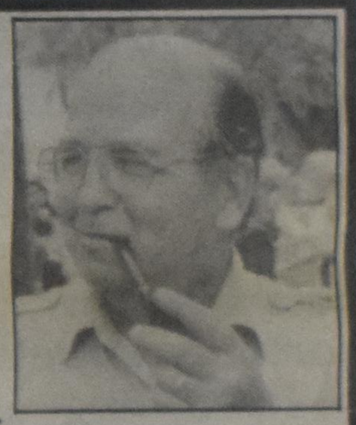
"One's enough," I replied. "One *expensive* can opener is enough buying for me." Noah's enthusiastic face saddened. He just looked at me for a long moment, turned, paused, then turned back. "Mom didn't lose the present, Grandpa, you did. Why are you punishing my mommy for what you did?"

Well, wasn't that just what I needed to hear from the very guy who knew I had to hear it. We got back in the car and returned to that store one last time, much to the grinning satisfaction of one loving little boy and his glad-to-stand-corrected grandfather.

The old prophet sure knew what he was talking about when he said, "And a little child shall lead them...." (Is. 11:6).

Art White is a freelance writer living in Clementsvale, N.S.

Books in Dutch by Herman de Jong



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Family

Small Talk

by Alice Los

Maintaining the family altar: *a relevant tradition*

In many Christian families, and perhaps especially so among those of the Reformed persuasion, it has always been a good tradition to have devotions at mealtime. Generations of parents and children have gathered around their kitchen tables to eat and to be spiritually nourished, often three times a day.

Has it always been relevant? Perhaps not. At times it may have been a mere ritual. For some it may have lacked an intimate, personal touch when day after day the same prayers were recited in the same monotonous drone.

And yet, all in all it has been part of a good Christian heritage which may well have become richer and more meaningful through the years for many believers.

In recent generations many mothers have happily taken their turn officiating at the family altar. Teenagers and children, too, will now play a natural, active role if given the opportunity. Day-to-day family concerns, global needs and affairs to the church are remembered to God. The reading of Scripture may follow a pattern or reflect the need of the hour.

And *always*, the smaller children will snuggle up with an adult. I've wondered why that is so. Is it simply a long-standing habit? A measure to keep them quiet? I like to think it to be symbolic of taking little ones to Jesus. And I would plead with today's Christian parents to adhere to these vital times of meditation and prayer as a family.

Creating the space for devotions

Yes, mornings are busy and schoolbuses don't wait. Dads may feel pressured by the demands of the coming day; moms are faced with a crammed agenda at home and very likely elsewhere. But is that not precisely *why* a believing family should proceed with the day by pausing for collective spiritual sustenance? Then, when all have returned to the fold by the end of the day, how could they not huddle together for comfort, sharing, laughter, and to seek love and forgiveness from heaven?

There are, of course, more believers besides busy parents and children. Retired people are supposed to have time on their hands, and to a certain extent they do. When there are only two people left to a house or, sadly, only one, there is at least more *quiet* time. One fine way to use such time is for laying up treasures in heaven. Many older folk may never yet have explored their Bible to exhaustion. Who ever has?

It follows that personal Bibles should be kept within easy reach. And mealtime prayers of aging parents, now at a table with only one or two plates, could still include all those children who once crowded around them at that same table. Why, that old placemat alone would remind them of their youngest — it's still used to cover up that scratch he once made when he thought he'd slice a piece of bread without the benefit of a cutting board. Not that they need any reminders! If their thoughts don't linger on their children they're probably busy with the third generation. And so, naturally, their prayers go up for all of them.

Uninhibited now, because none of them are there to listen in, and concerns, real or imagined, can be freely discussed with the Father of them all.

It's expected their prayers won't end there. What with the worldwide church, missions, friends, neighbors and the Christian press heavy on their minds, their family altar may well be attended more than ever! And to think, most of these older men and women became acquainted with that altar already in their highchairs! Thank God for meaningful, relevant Christian customs and traditions!

Alice Los lives in Listowel, Ont.

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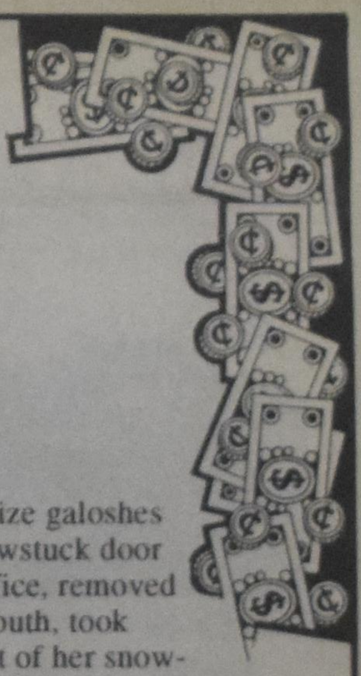
Keep the change



Art White

A tiny girl with oversize galoshes shouldered open the snowstuck door of our one-room post office, removed a red sucker from her mouth, took three large envelopes out of her snowsuit and plunked them on the counter above her.

"This is Mrs. Wright's mail," she boasted. "She doesn't have wheels today, so I'm the delivery girl. I'm supposed to ask about postage."

"The postage is OK, honey," said the postmaster.

"Merry Christmas, everyone," exclaimed the happy preschooler, "I get to keep *all* the change!" With lollipop at the ready, she paused a moment, then added, "Would someone please close this door after I go out?"

Art White is a freelance writer who lives in Clementsvale, N.S. He calls this story "a smile-length incident which happened last year in our little one-room post office." He adds: "I was lucky enough to have been there."

Merry Christmas

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REINDERS

Homes for disabled planned for Okanagan

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — Bethesda Christian Association for Handicapped People seeks to realize a long-held dream — expanding to the Okanagan.

The society which helps mentally disabled people and their families, hopes to build two homes in Kelowna for eight adults who are mentally and physically disabled.

Most of the individuals have high medical needs that require 24-hour support from dedicated and knowledgeable staff. Registered nurses, direct-care workers and a full-time director will be hired in the coming year.

The homes are scheduled to be completed by Oct. of 1994. Over the past few years Bethesda has developed homes, day programs, camps and other services that support 160 disabled individuals throughout the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island.

BETHESDA CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
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Experienced and knowledgeable individuals are invited to apply to work in one or two homes in providing 24-hour support to four mentally and physically challenged adults who have high medical concerns. **Full-time, part-time and casual positions are available for five Registered Nurses and 20 Direct-Care Workers.** Two of the R.N. positions are designated for Supervisor and Assistant Supervisor to provide leadership to both homes.

Start date is estimated for August 1994 (pending completion of new home construction) with selected interviews to take place in April/May 1994. Competitivie wages and benefits are available.

Please indicate the position you desire and forward your resume to:

Bethesda Kelowna Project
201, 31667 South Fraser Way
Clearbrook (Abbotsford), BC
V2T 1T9
Phone: (604) 850-6604 Fax: (604) 850-7242

BETHESDA CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
REGIONAL DIRECTOR
— Okanagan —

With its extension of ministry to disabled people and their families in the Okanagan, Bethesda is seeking a motivated individual to develop and to manage support programs including two homes slated for opening in the fall of 1994.

The successful applicant will be self-directed and will be involved with family visitations, quality services control, proposal development, networking with church members and professionals, public relations, personnel matters and fiscal control.

The middle-management person will have extensive experience in working with mentally disabled people and will have a minimum B.A. Degree in an applicable discipline.

Salary and benefits are negotiable with start date as soon as possible. This position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found. Related information will be sent to selected applicants. Please send your resume to:

Bert Altena, Executive Director
201, 31667 South Fraser Way
Clearbrook (Abbotsford), BC
V2T 1T9
Phone: (604) 850-6604 Fax: (604) 850-7242

Advice/News

'I can't speak English or French'

Brian Harrison

(Canadian Scene) — Think of yourself in a country where you can't speak the language of most people around you. According to the 1991 national census, that's exactly the situation of many Canadians. Partly because of heavy recent immigration, more residents of Canada are now unable to speak English or French than at any other time in this century. Some are unable to use services that most Canadians take for granted. Describing an illness to a doctor or reporting a crime to police is extremely difficult, and finding a good job almost impossible.

The national census asked respondents whether they spoke English or French well enough to conduct a conversation. In total, 378,000 residents indicated that they spoke neither official language. These include young children who could not yet speak any language, but even excluding children under five years of age from our calculations, 309,000 people couldn't speak English or French on census day in 1991.

Urban areas the key

In 1991, most people unable to speak an official language lived in large urban areas. Toronto, where almost 40 per cent of the population was born outside Canada, led the way with 124,000, followed by Vancouver (45,000) and Montreal (42,000). Edmonton and Calgary, the two major centres in Alberta, were each home to more than 10,000 people unable to speak either English or French.

We may tend to assume that after a few years in the country, immigrants learn to speak one of the official languages, but this is not the case for many. In some ethnic communities it is possible to conduct many daily activities in languages other than English or French; a situation that may continue for some time. In fact, of those unable to speak English or French, 135,000 had immigrated to Canada before 1981 and had been in Canada more than 10 years at the time of the 1991 census. In contrast, 95,000 had immigrated to Canada in the five years before the national census.

Combined, people with Chinese, Italian or Portuguese as their mother tongue account for more than half (54 per cent) of those unable to speak English or French in Canada.

Chinese, the fastest growing language group during the five years before the 1991 Census, was the mother tongue of 86,000, followed by Italian (46,000) and Portuguese (33,000). In each group, about 60 per cent of those unable to speak an official language were women. Many of the Chinese live in Toronto (32,000) or Vancouver (28,000), while the Italians live in Toronto (26,000) and Montreal (11,000). Most Portuguese (21,000) unable to speak English or French live in Toronto.

In the 1980s, heavy immigration, particularly during the last half of the decade, was largely responsible for the increase in those unable to speak English or French in Canada. The high levels of immigration projected for the next few years could mean more Canadians who will not be able to converse in either official language.

Brian Harrison is an analyst for Statistics Canada.

Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P & M:

How can you love others more than yourself and be self-sacrificial, and yet take care that someone won't walk all over you? How far can you allow yourself to get emotionally hurt in order to be always available for someone else? Here's my reason for asking.

Two years ago I ended a platonic friendship that caused me a lot of pain. This relationship was rare and special precisely because there were no "romantic overtones" to make things confusing. Unfortunately, it was common for my friend to ignore me for weeks or months on end. He saw this "ignoring" as something in his personality that I simply had to accept. But I felt a lot of guilt for being unable to handle his inconsistent attitude.

To me I always felt that I was giving him a second chance when he'd seek me out to talk. All the thanks I ever got for my endless compromising was a lot of hurt, so I finally decided that the friendship was not worth it. When I told him this, he seemed indifferent about the fact that I was unwilling to put any more energy into this relationship. I got the feeling, however, that he accused me of giving up and not being able to love unconditionally as I "ought" to do.

My failure to maintain this friendship left me feeling that I had failed God as well. Why didn't I have enough personal strength to follow through on God's commandment to love?

I still care for my friend very much; I just didn't like the way we related to each other. My decision to "give up" this friendship has been good for both of us in the long run. But how can I show my friend that I still love and care for him without resurrecting the rather hurtful friendship we used to have?

Dear Frustrated Friendship:

You and your friend entered this relationship with different expectations. He needed less contact; you needed more. He was content with the way things were; you felt frustrated and ignored.

Every friendship needs to figure out the mutual expectations that each party will have for the other. This sorting out process can be a painful business because the dynamics are so varied. In our own lives, for example, they've included time and schedule constraints, different ideas about the intensity and intimacy we wanted and needed, and even lack of interest.

In your friend's defense we must say that it is possible to have meaningful friendships with people whom you see infrequently. What makes it work, though, is the common understanding that it's alright, that both parties have busy lives and separate interests. When that's understood, there's no guilt, no hurt and no need to apologize when lives intersect again.

The person who is especially prone to get hurt is the one who expects more, wants more and invests more. This is what happened with you. In fact, although you celebrate the platonic nature of this relationship, we wonder whether you were actually hoping that this friendship could become romantic. Only you know this for sure, of course. But it may help you to be brutally honest here and search out your real feelings for this other person. If your motivation for getting together again is romance, you will probably become more frustrated if he does not fall in love with you. On the other hand, if your motivation is to deal with feelings of guilt you will probably become more discouraged as you again "fail" to generate the equal give-and-take that healthy relationships require.

We advise you to let this friendship go. It's probably the most lovingly self-sacrificial thing you can do for both of you. Put your time and energy into relationships that are mutually satisfying and relax with the friends in your life with whom you're "one in spirit" (I Sam. 18:1). If and when you cross paths with this old acquaintance, just be friendly. That's all.

By the way, one of our panelists recommended Robin Norwood's book *Women Who Love Too Much*. It's out in paperback and the public library also carries it. You might want to take a look at this helpful book.

Write to: P & M
c/o Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

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Picture this...

Today, women gather in the centre of a small, dusty African village. A local health promoter, trained by CRWRC, is standing next to a special kind of hanging weigh scale. She has charts and graphs in her hands.

Children are everywhere! Some are crying in their mothers' arms, others are being breast-fed, still others are old enough to run in circles around the women, laughing and playing boisterously.

Then the weighing begins. Mothers bring their youngest children forward to be weighed. One child has not gained enough weight for his age.

The health promoter pauses in the weighing and talks to the mother about what she should do to help her baby grow up healthy and strong.

After talking with the health promoter for awhile, the mother decides to join the village health group supported by CRWRC. There she will learn more about basic preventive health care and nutrition.

For less than $100, CRWRC can provide a weigh scale and training for a local health promoter who can serve the whole community, helping parents learn basic skills in preventive health care and nutrition. This means fewer infant deaths and children who live longer, healthier, happier lives!

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Today in Tanzania, men, women, and children bend over fragile green plants, tending seedlings in a newly developed tree nursery supported by CRWRC. In the distance, once barren hills now boast healthy young trees that are growing tall and strong. Land whose topsoil was once sifting away with the wind is now anchored by the sturdy roots of trees.

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The faces of the villagers are bright with happiness and pride for having solved their own problems.

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CRWRC

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Splitting the sky

"Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down" (Is. 64:1).

One of my favorite poets is Edna St. Vincent Millay. When she was only 19, she wrote the poem "Renascence." It begins with the poet looking into the sky, arrogantly assuming that she is able to plumb Infinity. But as she meditates on the natural world around her, its vastness impresses itself upon her and she finds herself nearly crushed beneath its weight. She goes through an experience of death and resurrection, and concludes:

The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.

Millay announces that those who are great in heart and soul can transcend the limits of the created world and discover God.

It's a masterful poem. But the project of splitting the sky in order to see the face of God began with the tower of Babel and is as doomed to fail today as it was then. It is our sin which separates us from God, not the dome of the sky or the immensity of the universe. And our soul — no matter what resolve we may have about spiritual rebirth and growth — will never develop strength enough to burst through that barrier on its own.

Isaiah understood what Millay could not: that the barrier between us and God must be broken from God's side and by God's initiative. "If only you would crack the sky and come down!" the prophet cries out to God. Isaiah knew that he could not split the sky and find the face of God, no matter how great his soul became, no matter how ecstatic his spiritual experience. Communing with nature under the sky will not result in our release into freedom from the slavery of sin. With Isaiah, we must recognize that our only hope is that God will tear the heavens open and come down!

The good news of the incarnation is that God has burst in. Although the barrier between us was not of his making, he has taken the initiative in breaking through. My poetry is not the equal of Edna St. Vincent Millay's, but I think it is more true.

He came — Immanuel. Not with the cry
Of battle, nor with thoughts of wealth or fame,
But with a hushed expectancy. His name
Throbbed as a pulse of hope through earth and sky,
The name which angels came to glorify.
He slipped through the cracked firmament and came
To speak the word of grace. Under the shame
Of sin the Word succumbed. He came to die.
Next time he will not steal behind the lines
An incognito envoy, spying out
The rebel forces for the rightful king;
But as the heir and conqueror who shines
With glorious rights divine, the Word will shout
And barricades will fall, as angels sing.

Some day, we will live on the other side of the sky, on the other side of the barrier which separates us from full communion with God. But already now, we can see through the gap and glimpse the face of God in the face of the baby born in Bethlehem.

Laura Smit is pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Clayton, N.J.

An artist in the Chinese night

A Little Tiger in the Chinese Night: An Autobiography in Art, *Song Nan Zhang. Montreal: Tundra Books, 1993. ISBN 0-88776-320-0. Hardcover, 48 pp., $19.95. Reviewed by Doro J. Bakker, Nanaimo, B.C.*

In this unique autobiography, Song Nan Zhang gives a human face to the last 50 years of China's turbulent history.

When first approached to do a book that would combine his personal story and his paintings, Song Nan initially responded with puzzled amazement. "This is the first time anyone has ever asked me to paint me from my own life. In China, the individual doesn't matter. It has always been the general experience."

Song Nan was not yet three years old when he spotted a little tiger in the thick bamboo. "A good omen," the elders said. And so it was. Song Nan enjoyed life in Shanghai in the years after the second World War. But the tides turned on the good fortunes of his early childhood. In 1949 the communists took over China, and Song Nan's father moved to Peking "to take part in what he believed would make China better for all its people." Instead, this was the beginning of one nightmare after another for Song Nan and his family.

Song Nan takes us through the upheavals of his student days — the time of the Great Leap Forward. Life was difficult. Schools were regularly shut down and students forced to do manual labor. Song Nan remembers building a dam, along with thousands of other people, with nothing more than a shovel and a basket to haul away the dirt. Each night they returned to the village exhausted and hungry to attend group meetings that convinced them how they were being "improved."

Then came the cultural revolution — a time "when madness swept China," a time when Song Nan's father was persecuted and his sisters and brothers banished. Can anyone describe the horrors?" Song Nan reflects. "The only happiness in those years was that I fell in love."

The chaos finally eased with the death of Mao in 1976. For a professional artist like Song Nan that meant recognition and government support and an opportunity to go abroad. In 1984 Song Nan was invited to go to France as an exchange art student. What a shock! "For decades I had been told that in capitalist countries only a few were rich and everyone else was poor. I discovered that everything that I had been told, everything I had believed, was a lie." Song Nan's life took a series of twists and turns that brought him to Montreal. From here he experienced the tragedy of Tiananmen Square and here he ultimately made his home.

Song Nan ends his book on a haunting note.

"What can I say about my life? Did the little tiger bring me luck?

"My luck seems to have come and gone, just as the little tiger came and went. At present I feel very lucky indeed.

"But what happened to the little tiger itself? Did it find a place to live and grow without being chased back into the dark?

"Will China ever find such a place?"

This is indeed a unique work. Song Nan's paintings and his simple text are impressive and powerful. Both combine to expand on and illuminate the other. The result is evocative. Through the eyes of one man a window is opened for us, and we glimpse at the broken dreams and enduring hope of a whole nation.

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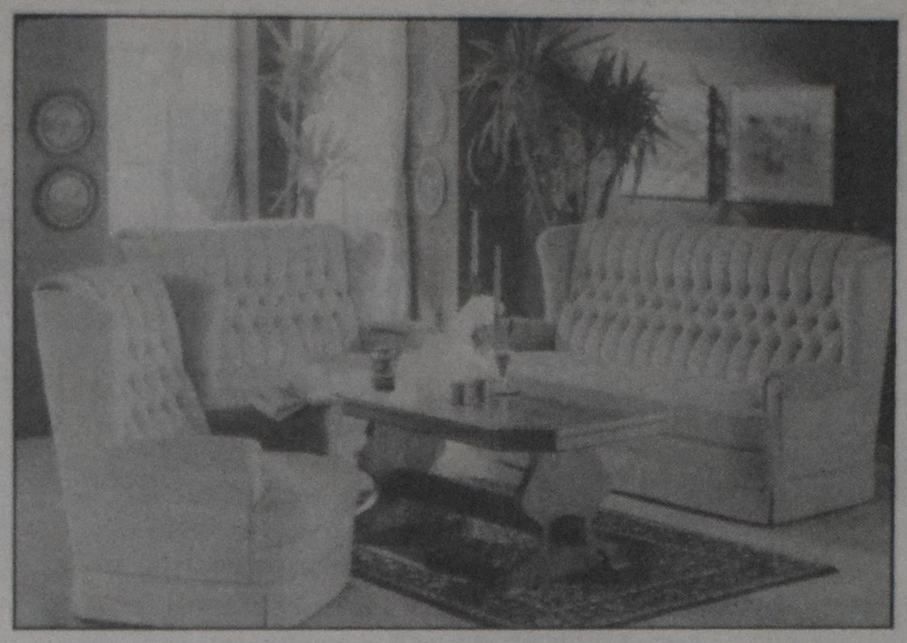

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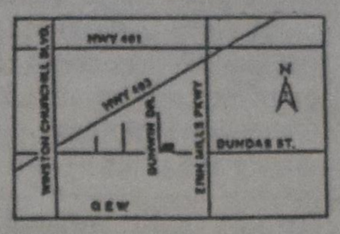

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Who is the new Banner editor?

John Suk was born in St. Catharines, Ont., and moved to Brampton, Ont., where he went to Toronto District Christian High School. He attended Dordt College and is a graduate of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. He is presently working on his doctorate in communications. Before becoming Banner editor, John taught English at Durham Christian High School in Bowmanville, Ont., then pastored churches in Sarnia, Ont., and Ann Arbor, Mich. He is married and has two children.

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a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

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c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

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St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

Christmas Greetings

LIEVERDINK:
To all my family and friends, may you experience peace and joy this Christmas, and may God direct your footsteps throughout 1994.
Grada Lieverdink.

VAN MARRUM:
To my family and friends a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.
Gerlof Van Marrum, 143 Rock St., Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

Births

ABMA-VAN EEK:
God has again given us new life.
AARON FREDERICK
was born on Nov. 13, 1993.
Mike, Shirlene, and big sister Annalise joyfully welcome him into the family. He is the 16th grandchild for Fred and Alice Abma of Strathroy, and the ninth grandchild for Arie and Ellen Van Eek of Waterdown. He is also the 21st great-grandchild for Beppe J. Osinga of Blauwhuis, Friesland.
Home address: 110 King St. W., Bowmanville, ON L1C 1R5

SJAARDA-EGGENGOOR:
Joyfully, we, BettyAnn and James thank the Lord for
JULIA BEATRIX
our beautiful, healthy daughter, born on Sept. 7, 1993.
Julia is a sister for Oliver, a granddaughter for Evelyn and Ed Eggengoor, Brampton, Lucille and Ken Sjaarda, Toronto, and a great-granddaughter for Lutina Wielhouwer, Chatham, Syke Sjaarda, Clinton, Matthys and Neely Maas, Brampton, and Gerd and Berendina Eggengoor, Orillia.
Home address: R.R. #1, Site 4A#1, Port Sydney, ON P0B 1L0

Marriages

EGGENGOOR-DEKLEER:
NANCY
and
GEORGE
are getting married on Dec. 23, 1993, at 7 p.m., at Immanual Chr. Ref. Church, Brampton, Ont., Pastor Peter Hoytema officiating.
Congratulations and God's blessings.
Ed and Evelyn Eggengoor.
Harold and Helen DeKleer.
Future address: 459 Shaw St., Toronto, ON M6G 3L4

Anniversaries

New Westminster, B.C. — Langley, B.C.
1953 December 12 1993
"This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118: 24).
With thankfulness to God, we celebrate with joy the 40th anniversary of our parents and grandparents,
KLAAS and WILMA NIEROP
(nee DE JONG)
With love:
Wilma & Will Hansma
Wayne, Shawn, Michael & Miranda
Margaret & Richard Hoekstra
Karen, Keith, Lisa, Laura
Gary & Diana Nierop
Angela, Natalie, Ryan, Melissa
Caroline & Tim Pors
Patricia, Stephanie
Home address: 7021-204 Street, Langley, BC V3A 4P7

Anniversaries

1968 Dec. 13 1993
"I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them" (Jer. 32:39).
With thankfulness to the Lord, we joyfully announce the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,
JOE and ANN VAN TUYL
(HARTMAN)
We thank God for His guidance and care. May He continue to bless and keep you for many years.
With love and congratulations from your children and grandchildren:
Jim & Joanne Schreuders — St. Marys, Ont.
Derek, Desirée, Nicolas
Chris & Monica Zantingh — Dunnville, Ont.
James Van Tuyl — at home
Please join us as we celebrate with them at an open house reception, to be held in the Wellandport Community Centre at 5042 Canborough Road in Wellandport, Ont., on Friday, Dec. 17, 1993, at 8 p.m.
Best wishes only, please.
Home address: 738 Lincoln Street, P.O. Box #8, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0

Congratulations to Klaas and Wilma Nierop (nee De Jong) on the occasion of their 40th anniversary!

Miscellaneous

How to Write Your Memoirs!
or talk your parents into writing theirs. A manual with proven methods to write life stories, writing and publishing info. Send $7.95 to Family Memories Pub., 44 South Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4V2 or call:
(905) 688-1280

Obituaries

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust" (Ps. 91:1,2).
On Nov. 19, 1993, the Lord in His mercy took unto Himself our loving mother and Beppe,
TINA BEEKHUIS
(BIEREMA)
in her 79th year.
Lovingly remembered by:
Freda & Peter Haagsma — Ingersoll
Wayne & Karen (Karissa, Jenna), Dave & Jill, Steve & Deb (fiancee), Alida
John Bergman — Niagara-on-the-Lake
Jonathan, Michael
Hank & Ruth Beekhuis — St. Catharines
Allison, Justin, Erin, Jordan
Predeceased by her husband, Albert (1975), and daughter, Stena Bergman (1987).
The funeral service was held on Monday, Nov. 22, 1993, at First Chr. Ref. Church, London, Revs. Peter Hogeterp and Wayne Brouwer officiating.
Correspondence address: Freda Haagsma, R.R. #1, Salford, ON N0J 1W0

Obituaries

In loving memory
TINA NIEUWENHUIS
(PANDER)
of Kurtzville, formerly of Wingham, passed away in her 68th year, at the University Hospital in London, Ont., on Monday Nov. 15, 1993.
Loved mother of:
Hanny Nieuwenhuis — Kitchener
Janice & John Visser — Ottawa
Anna Nieuwenhuis — Mt. Forest
Ben Nieuwenhuis and his wife — Toronto
Andy Nieuwenhuis — Kitchener
Ronald Nieuwenhuis — Kurtzville
Gerard Nieuwenhuis — Kurtzville
Fondly remembered by seven grandchildren. Dear sister of Auke Pander of the Netherlands.
Predeceased by her husband Bareld Nieuwenhuis (1971), one infant daughter, three sisters and three brothers.
Service was held at Glen Allen Mennonite Church on Friday Nov. 19, 1993, with Rev. Mark Hallman officiating. Interment in the adjoining church cemetary.
Pallbearers were Ben, Andy, Ronald, Gerard and Thomas Nieuwenhuis, and John Visser.
Memorial donations to the Heart and Stroke Foundation or to the Canadian Diabetes Association would be greatly appreciated.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-2).
On Nov. 15, 1993, at the age of 38, the Lord called home to eternal glory,
NANCI MITRUK
Dearly loved and sadly missed by:
Parents John & Alice Zuidema — Ridgeway.
Husband Michael — Ridgeway
Children Cassandra and Jordan — Ridgeway
Sisters:
Ann Zuidema — Ceres, Calif.
Emmy & Bill De Boer — Belleville
Debbie, Eric, John, Benjamin
Jean & Clint Conway — Ridgeway
John, Heather
Louise Zantingh — Smithville
Allison, Natasha
Joyce Bedard — Welland
Christopher
Brother:
Ben Zuidema — Modesto, Calif.
Tami, Kevin
Great nieces Mirinda, Brianne.
Great nephews Brandon, Kevin.
Also many aunts, uncles and cousins in Holland. Predeceased by sister-in-law Carol and niece Lauri.
Correspondence address: R.R. #2, Ridgeway, ON L0S 1N0

Take advantage of our Business Directory next week !

Classifieds

Obituaries

Tzum, Holland Taber, Alta.
Sept. 17, 1912 - Nov. 12, 1993

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8: 28).

After a lengthy illness and much suffering, the Lord welcomed home to eternal glory our wife, mother and Beppe,

MINKE YPMA
(GREIDANUS)

She will be sadly missed by her husband, Anne Ypma, and her children and grandchildren:

Patsy & Klaas Linker — Strathroy, Ont.
Terry & Jane, Melinda & Henry, Janice & William, Allan & Rhonda
George & Aafke Ypma — Brownsville, Ont.
Jane & Jack, Arnold & Kathy, Marilyn & Harry, Jo-Anne & Rob, Peter & Charlena, William
Siebe & Martje Ypma — Taber, Alta.
Albert & Carol-Ann, Florene, Mary-Ann, Sidney
Jacob & Pia Ypma — Salmon Arm, Alta.
Esther, Patrick, Ingrid
Louis & Sheila Ypma — Taber, Alta.
Lyle & Carol, Tanya, Lloyd, Keith, Dale
Elizabeth & George VandeKuyt — Mount Hope, Ont.
Geoffrey, Henry, Michael, Cynthia, Robbie, Andrew
Cathy & Mike Wind — Taber, Alta.
Monica, Karen, Jeremy, Linda, Rachel, Cheryl, Kevin

and 27 great-grandchildren.

Also survived by three sisters and two brothers, all in Holland, and a sister in Ontario. She was predeceased by four sisters, two brothers and a granddaughter.

Funeral services were held in Taber Chr. Ref. Church on Nov. 16, 1993.

Correspondence address: P.O. Box 1584, Taber, AB T0K 2G0

Teachers

RED DEER, Alta.: The **Red Deer Chr. School** is in need of a **music/drama teacher** (60%), beginning in February 1994. This position includes classes from K-6, using Kodaly/Orff methodology, Junior High band, conducting a Grade 4-6 choir and teaching Junior High drama. Although this is a maternity leave position, it is possible that it will become a permanent position for 1994/95. Applicants should be strong Christians with strengths in music and relating to all levels of students and be certifiable in the province of Alberta. Please send inquiries and applications to:

Red Deer Chr. School
14 McVicar St.
Red Deer, AB T4N 0M1
Att.: Mr. R. Duggan
Phone: (403) 346-5795

Teachers

AYLMER, Ont.: The board of **Immanuel Chr. School** is inviting applications for a **full-time administrative/teaching position** (60%-40%), beginning August 1994. Administrative experience is required. Please send application and resume to:

John KrienseLokker, chairman
Immanuel Chr. School
75 Caverly Road
Aylmer, ON
N5H 2P6

DUNNVILLE, Ont.: Dunnville Chr. School invites applicants for a **temporary 60% position** in the **intermediate grades** from April 1 to June 30, 1994. Candidates will require some French qualifications and teaching experience in Grades 6-8. Applicants are asked to forward inquiries and resumes to:

Richard Van Egmond, Principal
Dunnville Chr. School
R.R. #1
Dunnville, ON
N1A 2W1
(905) 774-5142

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GLORY TO THE NEWBORN KING

Job Opportunities

Toronto District Christian High School
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invites applications for the position of

PRINCIPAL

to assume responsibilities starting in the **1994/95** school year.

TDCH is a school of 300 students, Grades 9 through OAC. If you are an experienced administrator and interested in leading a dedicated staff in a supportive Christian community, we invite your inquiry before **December 15, 1993.** A minimum of five years administrative experience is desirable. Contact:

Mr. Albert Romkema
Chairman - Search Committee
c/o Toronto District Christian High
377 Woodbridge Ave.
Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8
Tel.: (905) 851-1772

KINGSTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
invites applications for the position of

PRINCIPAL

to assume responsibilities for the 1994/95 school year. KCS is an 160 student, interdenominational school, JK - 8, located in a pleasant city, on the shores of Lake Ontario. If you are a team leader, enjoy diversity in Christian Community, and strive for educational excellence, we would like to hear from you. The position includes some teaching.

Please send your application to:
Mr. Dan Wyngaarden
Chairman - Board of Directors
c/o Kingston Christian School
1212 Woodbine Road
Kingston, ON K7L 4V2
Tel. (613) 384-2771 (hm) Fax (613) 542-0645

SEEKING A PASTOR

The **Chr. Ref. Church, Alliston**, Ont., a 40 year old church of 77 families, is currently seeking an experienced pastor to lead us in our Christian walk of life. Our priorities are Biblical preaching, outreach, and an interest in youth. Alliston is a growing community situated in south-central Ontario, approximately 45 minutes north of Toronto. Inquiries and/or resumes may be forwarded to: **the Search Committee, c/o Mr. Aris DeBruin, R.R. #2, Beeton, ON L0G 1A0, Phone (705) 435-5317, Fax (705) 435-3351**

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PRINCIPAL

Clinton and District Christian School
Clinton, Ont.

We are presently looking for a qualified **principal** to assist us in providing Christ-centred education to our students. This is a 70 per cent administrative position and 30 per cent teaching. At the present time we have an enrolment of 222 students and a staff of 11 teachers. Send your resume to:

Mr. Gordon Kaastra
Box 545
Clinton, ON N7A 3X8

Applications must be received by January 10, 1994.

Miscellaneous

AVAILABLE FOR CALL

The Council of the **First Chr. Ref. Church of Kitchener**, Ont., recommends the Rev. Dan Tigchelaar to the congregations of the Christian Reformed Church for a call. He may be contacted at **129 Meaford Drive, Waterloo, ON N2J 4K4.**
Phone (519) 888-6380.

Calendar

Dec. 4 "The King's Guild 15th Annual Arts & Crafts Sale." From 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., at The King's College, **Edmonton**, alta. Admission: one Canadian dollar!

Dec. 4 Salem's annual meeting, 9 a.m., Second CRC, **Brampton**, Ont. Refreshments at 8:45 a.m. Panel discussion at 10:30 a.m. on the theme: "No Safety in the Sanctuary (Abuse in the Church)." Everyone welcome. Lunch available.

Dec. 4 Christmas concert by "The Mattaniah Male Choir" (dir. H. Den Hollander) with Andre Knevel at the organ, 8 p.m., Mountainview CRC, **Grimsby**, Ont. Admission $5 (students $3).

Dec. 5 Special Advent service with the "Adoramus-Maranatha Choir," 7 p.m., CRC, **Fruitland**, Ont.

Dec. 10 Christmas concert by the "Redeemer College Concert Choir" with chamber orchestra. At 8 p.m., RC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

Dec. 12 "Nederlandse Kerstzangdienst," assisted by the church choir, 7:30 p.m., Emmanuel Reformed Church (170 Clarke St. N.), **Woodstock**, Ont. Refreshments.

Dec. 15-22 Christmas concerts by the Ontario Chr. Music Assembly, directer by Leendert Kooij, with Andre Knevel at the organ. **Dec. 15:** 8 p.m., Rehoboth CRC, **Bowmanville**, Ont.; **Dec. 18:** 8 p.m., Willowdale United Church (Kenneth Ave.), **Willowdale**, Ont.; **Dec. 22:** 8 p.m., Melrose United Church (86 Homewood Ave.), **Hamilton**, Ont. For tickets call (416) 636-9779.

Dec. 17 Annual candlelight service with the "Adoramus-Maranatha Choir," 8 p.m., Mount Hamilton CRC, **Hamilton**, Ont.

Dec. 18 Handel's "Messiah," presented by the Georgetown Choral Society, 8 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Proceeds for the college.

Dec. 19 Annual candlelight service with the "Adoramus-Maranatha Choir," 7:30 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **York**, Ont.

Miscellaneous

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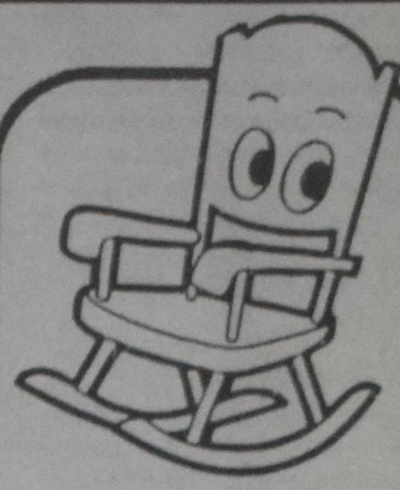
Miscellaneous



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Grimsby, ON
L3M 4N5

From the Residents of Shalom Manor, a Christian Long Term Care Facility in Grimsby, Ont., to their loved ones and friends: "May JOY be your gift at Christmas, and may FAITH, HOPE and LOVE be your Treasures in the New Year."

Mr. and Mrs. Cornelis Van Dijk
Mr. Cornelis and Mrs. Suzanna Verboom
Mrs. Jantje Molema
Mrs. Geesje Haveman
Mrs. Grietje Van der Leek
Mrs. Dini Teeuwsen
Mr. and Mrs. John Colyn
Mr. and Mrs. Dirk Faber
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Mr. and Mrs. Barteld Kronemyer
Mr. and Mrs. Dirk Bokma

News

Couple thinks big for Christmas dinner guest list

Irene Bom

FORT FRANCES, Ont. — For most Canadians, Christmas means family time, with a steaming turkey pulling far-flung siblings together around a table for one day.

Not so for Ray and Elsie Van Schaick, both Salvation Army majors now living in the tiny community of Fort Frances, Ont., located 300 kilometres west of Thunder Bay.

Twenty-five years ago the Van Schaicks started their Christmas tradition when they headed out to the local Army addictions rehabilitation centre to spend the day serving dinners to program residents and the homeless.

Since then the locations have changed, but the routine has not. The couple has moved to centres in the capitals of most of the provinces where they continue their yearly pattern.

"The kids just learned to accept it," says Elsie. "They grew up with it," adds Ray.

Build family atmosphere

Both are quick to point out that the free dinners, served to 9,000 needy people at 29 centres across the country last year, actually help to reinforce and expand the idea of family at Christmas.

"We spend Christmas Eve at the centre trying to create a special atmosphere," explains Ray, who says that a warm atmosphere is as important as the hot food on holidays.

"Christmas and New Year's Eve are the most traumatic two days of the year for people in substance abuse treatment programs because it's the time to party. So we give them a partying atmosphere without the 'substance,'" he explains.

"And some people show up just to eat with other people on that day. It's more than a free meal for them."

That warm, communal atmosphere attracts an increasing number of volunteers to help serve as well, he adds.

"A lot of people are alone and come to help out and be with others," says Ray, adding that last year a centre in Winnipeg had so many requests to help serve that it had to turn several down.

Over the years the Van Schaicks have noticed a change in the people who accept the open invitation for a free Christmas dinner.

"There's a lot more kids and whole families showing up now" instead of just men, says Elsie. "There's a lot of desperate people out there."

This year will bring a change for the long-serving couple, no longer close enough to a centre to help serve at Christmas. Do their plans include a quiet dinner for the couple this time around?

"Oh no," laughs Elsie. "We'll probably have people in for dinner." Great traditions die hard.

PHOTO: SAM MCLEOD, THE LONDON FREE PRESS

PHOTO COURTESY OF R. VAN SCHAICK

Christmas and New Year's Eve are the most traumatic two days of the year

New name for The King's College

CC staff

EDMONTON — The King's College is now a university in name as well as program.

Following the passing of a private bill in the last session of the Alberta legislature, the institution will be called "The King's University College." The name was changed to distinguish it more clearly from community colleges and vocational colleges.

King's president Henk Van Andel says the new name "better reflects the fact that The King's University College offers university programs only, leading to Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees."

The King's University College is a non-denominational Christian college, and one of four private, accredited degree-granting institutions in Alberta. It has a current enrolment of 417 students.

News of the name change arrived at the same time that the Ontario minister of education rejected a letter campaign by supporters of Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., to allow that institution to grant BA and B.Sc. degrees.

News Digest

Edited by Irene Bom

Breast implants tied to memory loss

CHICAGO, Ill. — More than 80 per cent of over 1,000 women with breast implants who were referred to neurologists at Baylor College of Medicine have shown mild to severe short-term memory losses, according to the Medical Tribune News Service.

Neurologist Dr. Bernard Patten said that typically, "within two to three minutes some can't remember either the content of a conversation or that the conversation actually happened."

The women have experienced about a 70 per cent recovery rate when the implants have been removed, he said.

Drivers 'forgetting' to buckle up

TORONTO (Toronto Star) — About 1 million people in Ontario still don't buckle up when they're on the road, says Ontario's transportation ministry.

One third of survey respondents said they forgot. Another 25 per cent said they were only going a short distance, while 13 per cent said it was too inconvenient.

A survey last June showed that 84 per cent in Ontario were buckling up, compared to 97 per cent of drivers in Newfoundland and 91 per cent in British Columbia.

Seat belt use is lowest among riders of vans and light trucks.

Fetal tissue debate

MONTREAL (CP) — A significant number of doctors say women who have abortions give up their right to decide whether the fetal tissue can be used for scientific experiments, says a Toronto researcher.

Michelle Mullen, of the Centre for Bioethics at the University of Toronto, said more than a third of the 600 Ontario doctors who responded to her survey said consent for the abortion could be viewed as permission to use the tissue.